CLAMP

LEGAL DRUG

A DRUGSTORE WITH MEDICINE AND A DANGER.

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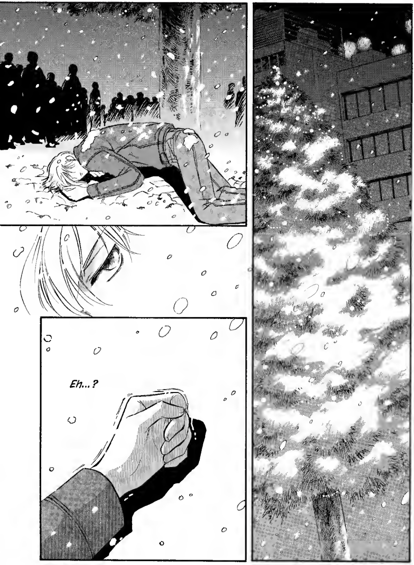
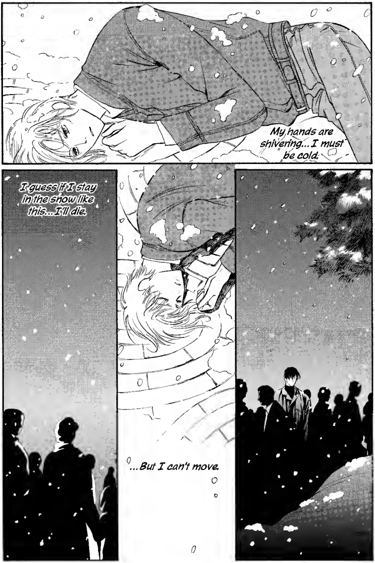
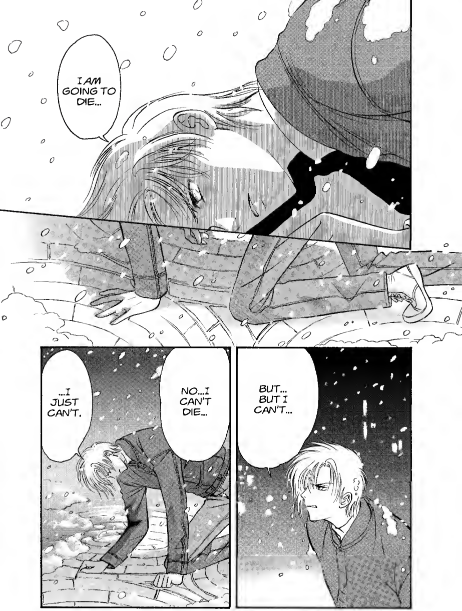
LEGAL DRUG

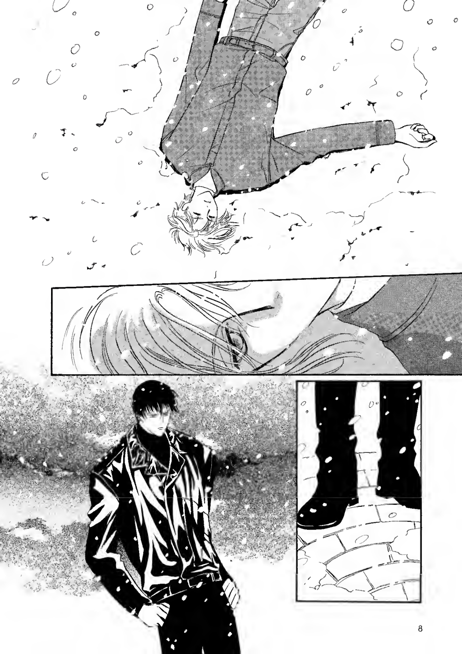
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

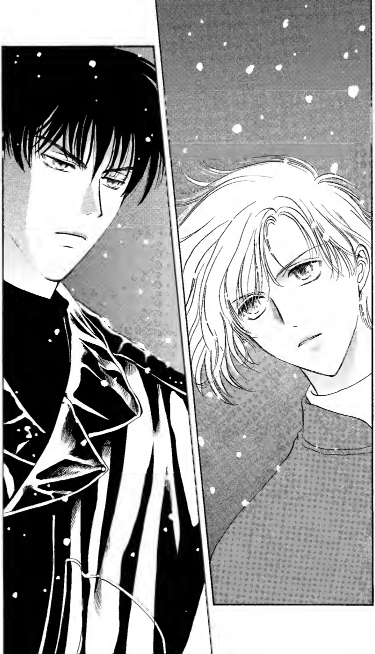
DRUG NO.01

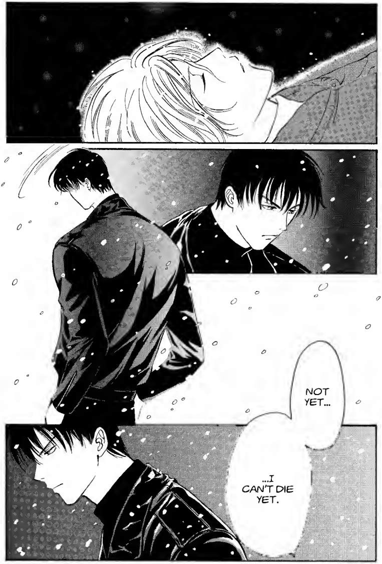

Eh...?

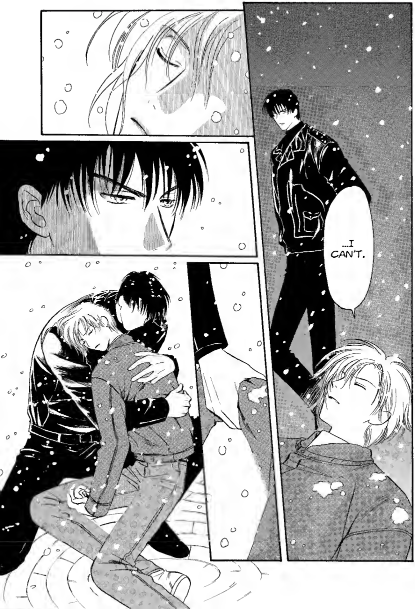

My hands are shivering... I must be cold.
I guess if I stay in the snow like this... I'll die.
...But I can't move.

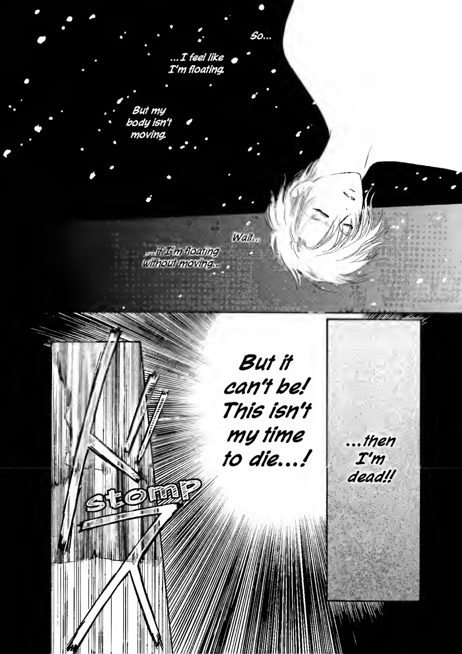

I AM GOING TO DIE...
BUT... BUT I CAN'T...
NO...I CAN'T DIE...
...I JUST CAN'T.

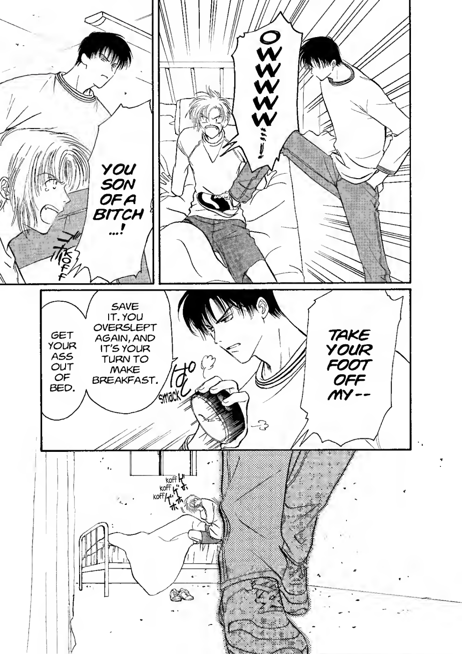


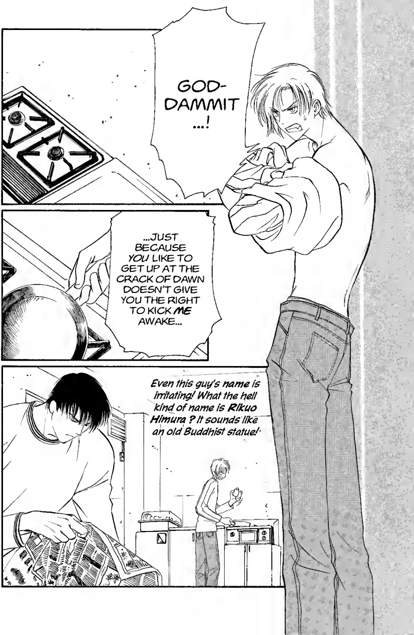


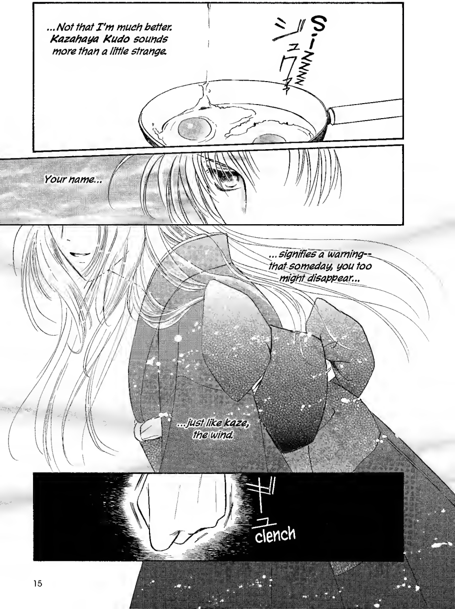

NOT YET...
...I CAN'T DIE YET.

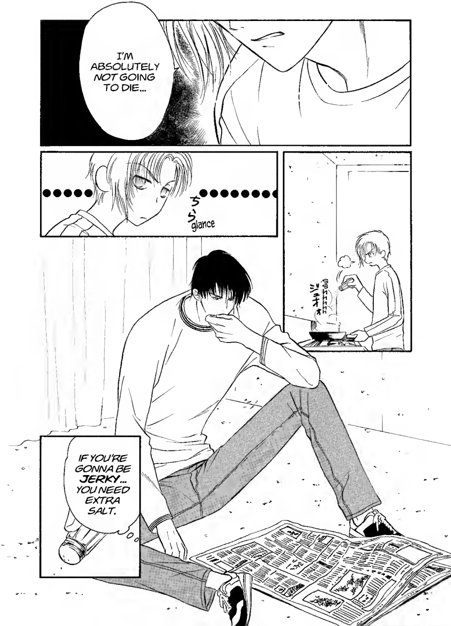

...I CAN'T.

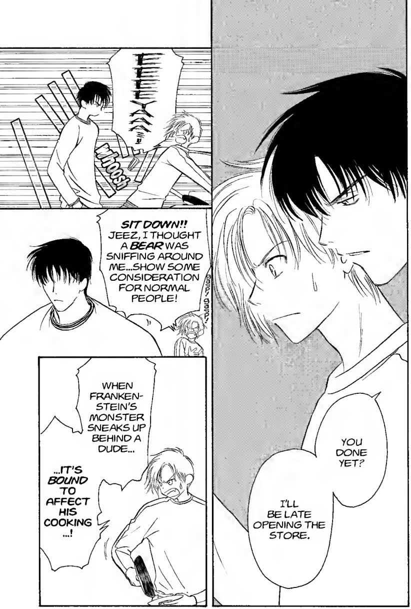

So...
...I feel like I'm floating.
But my body isn't moving.
Wait...
...if I'm floating without moving...
...then I'm dead!!
But it can't be! This isn't my time to die...!
stomp

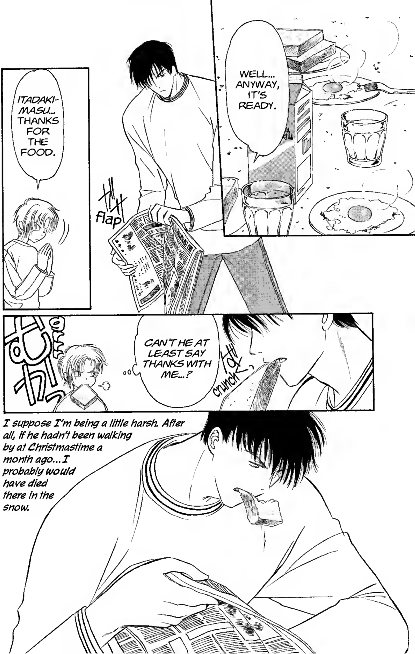

OWWWWW...!
YOU SON OF A BITCH ...!
KOFF
TAKE YOUR FOOT OFF MY--
SAVE IT. YOU OVERSLEPT AGAIN, AND IT'S YOUR TURN TO MAKE BREAKFAST.
GET YOUR ASS OUT OF BED.
smack
koff koff koff

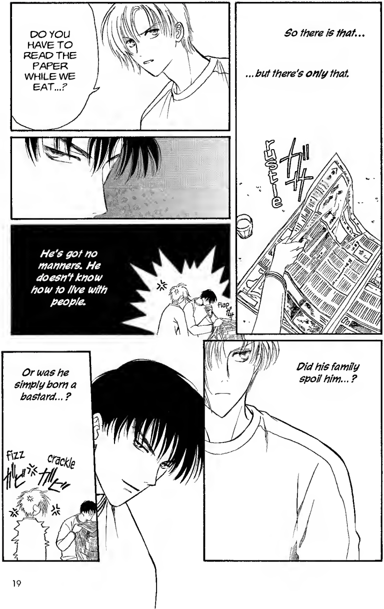

GOD-DAMMIT ...!
...JUST BECAUSE *YOU* LIKE TO GET UP AT THE CRACK OF DAWN DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO KICK ***ME*** AWAKE...
Even this guy's name is irritating! What the hell kind of name is ***Rikuo Himura****? It sounds like an old Buddhist statue!*

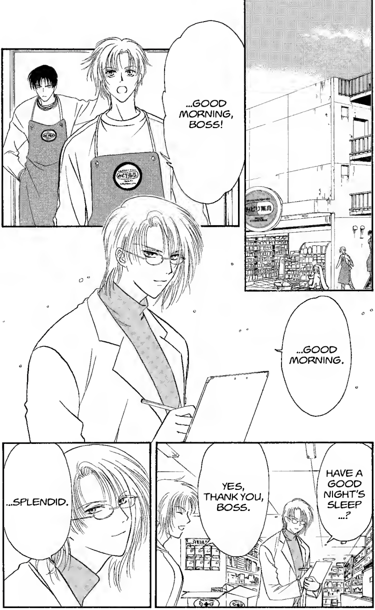

ジュワァ
SIZZZZZ
...Not that I'm much better. **Kazahaya Kudo** sounds more than a little strange.
Your name...
...signifies a warning--that someday, you too might disappear...
...just like kaze, the wind.
ギュ
clench

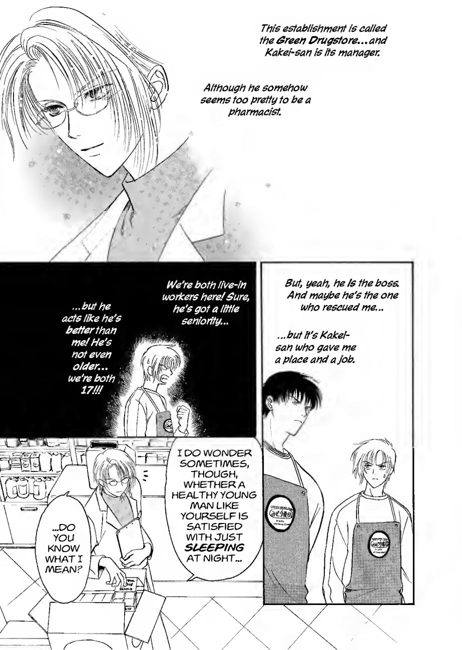
I'M ABSOLUTELY NOT GOING TO DIE...
ジュオオ
SHHHHHH
••••••••••••••
ちら
glance
IF YOU'RE GONNA BE JERKY... YOU NEED EXTRA SALT.

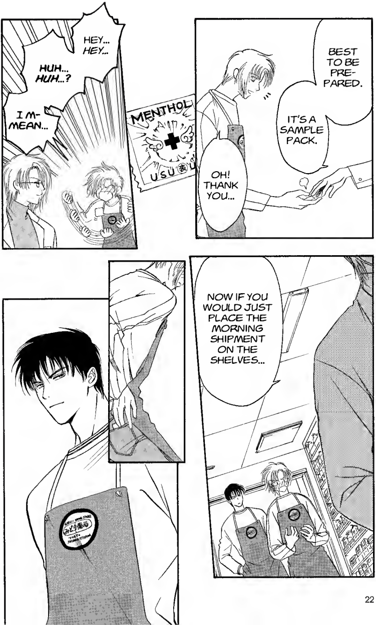

YOU DONE YET?
I'LL BE LATE OPENING THE STORE.
EEEEEK!!
whoosh
SIT DOWN!! JEEZ, I THOUGHT A ***BEAR*** WAS SNIFFING AROUND ME...SHOW SOME CONSIDERATION FOR NORMAL PEOPLE!
gasp! gasp!
WHEN FRANKEN-STEIN'S MONSTER SNEAKS UP BEHIND A DUDE...
...IT'S ***BOUND*** TO AFFECT HIS COOKING ...!

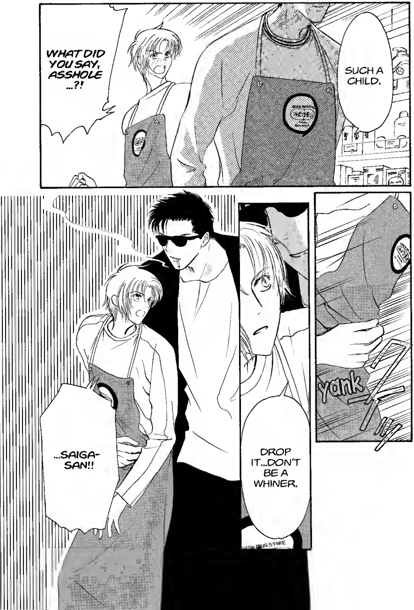

WELL... ANYWAY, IT'S READY.
flap
ITADAKIMASU... THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
crunch
CAN'T HE AT LEAST SAY THANKS WITH ME...?
I suppose I'm being a little harsh. After all, if he hadn't been walking by at Christmastime a month ago... I probably would have died there in the snow.

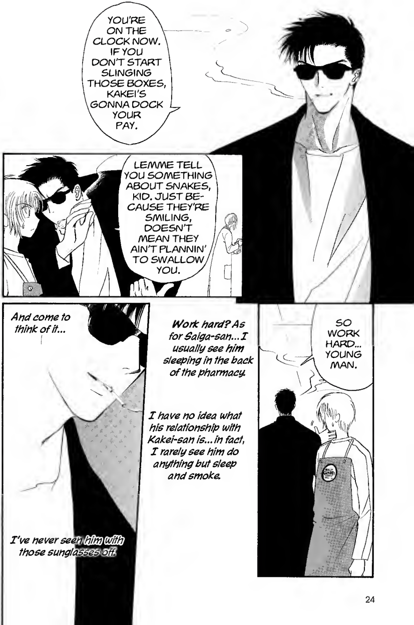

So there is that...
...but there's only that.
rustle
DO YOU HAVE TO READ THE PAPER WHILE WE EAT...?
He's got no manners. He doesn't know how to live with people.
Flap
Did his family spoil him...?
Or was he simply born a bastard...?
Fizz
crackle

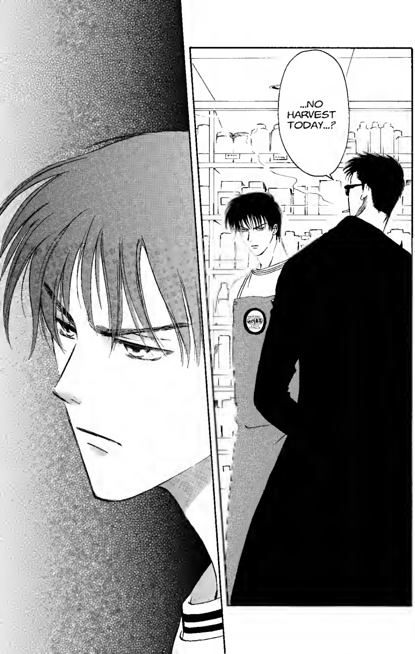

...GOOD MORNING, BOSS!
...GOOD MORNING.
HAVE A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP ...?
YES, THANK YOU, BOSS.
...SPLENDID.

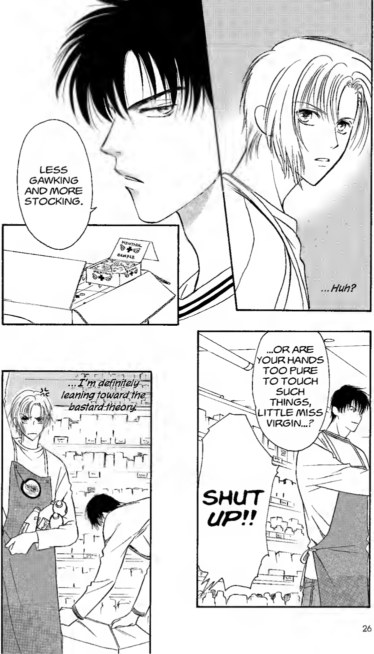

This establishment is called the **Green Drugstore...** and Kakei-san is its manager.
Although he somehow seems too pretty to be a pharmacist.
But, yeah, he *is* the boss. And maybe he's the one who rescued me...
...but it's Kakei-san who gave me a place and a job.
We're both live-in workers here! Sure, he's got a little seniority...
...but he acts like he's better than me! He's not even older... we're both 17!!!
I DO WONDER SOMETIMES, THOUGH, WHETHER A HEALTHY YOUNG MAN LIKE YOURSELF IS SATISFIED WITH JUST ***SLEEPING*** AT NIGHT...
...DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

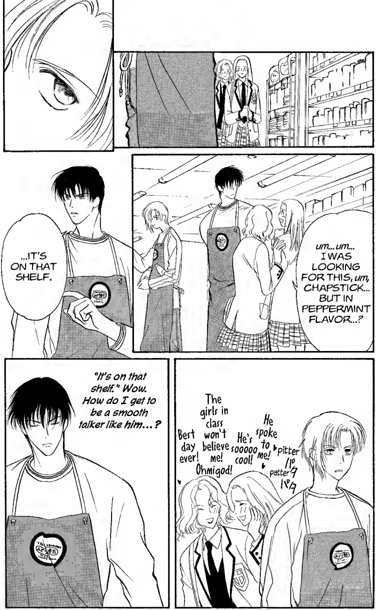

BEST TO BE PREPARED.
IT'S A SAMPLE PACK.
OH! THANK YOU...
MENTHOL
USU
HEY... HEY...
HUH... HUH...?
I M- MEAN...
NOW IF YOU WOULD JUST PLACE THE MORNING SHIPMENT ON THE SHELVES...
みどり薬局

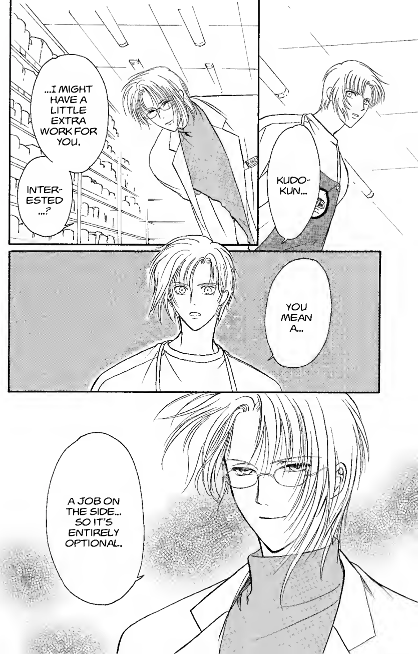

SUCH A CHILD.
WHAT DID YOU SAY, ASSHOLE ...?!
yank
DROP IT...DON'T BE A WHINER.
DRUG STORE
...SAIGA-SAN!!

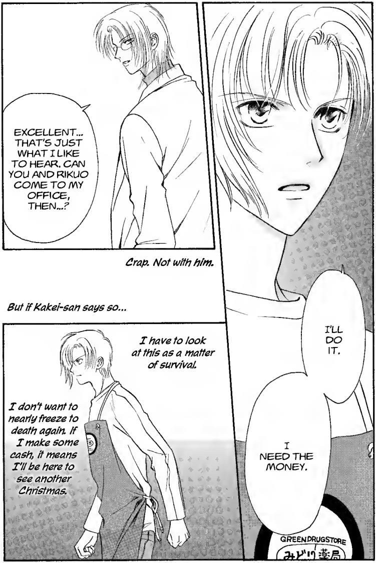

YOU'RE ON THE CLOCK NOW. IF YOU DON'T START SLINGING THOSE BOXES, KAKEI'S GONNA DOCK YOUR PAY.
LEMME TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT SNAKES, KID. JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE SMILING, DOESN'T MEAN THEY AIN'T PLANNIN' TO SWALLOW YOU.
SO WORK HARD... YOUNG MAN.
Work hard? As for Saiga-san... I usually see him sleeping in the back of the pharmacy.
I have no idea what his relationship with Kakei-san is... in fact, I rarely see him do anything but sleep and smoke.
And come to think of it...
I've never seen him with those sunglasses off.

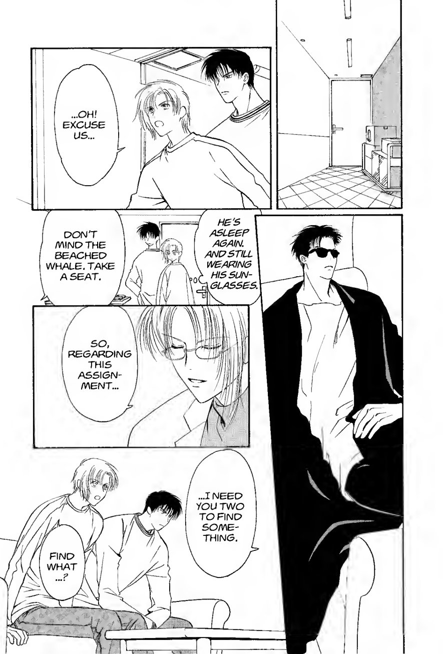

...NO HARVEST TODAY...?

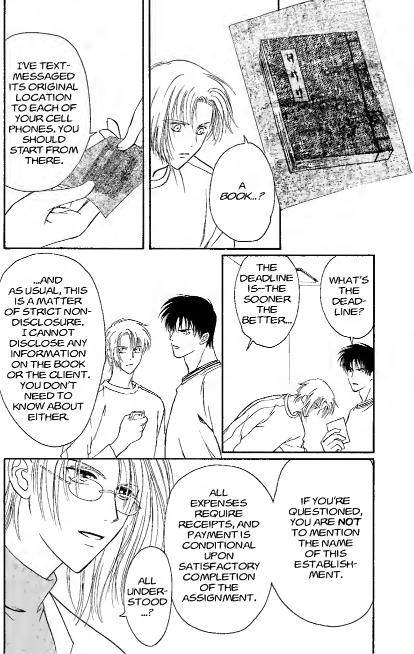

LESS GAWKING AND MORE STOCKING.
MENTHOL SAMPLE
MENTHOL
...Huh?
...OR ARE YOUR HANDS TOO PURE TO TOUCH SUCH THINGS, LITTLE MISS VIRGIN...?
SHUT UP!!
...I'm definitely leaning toward the bastard theory.

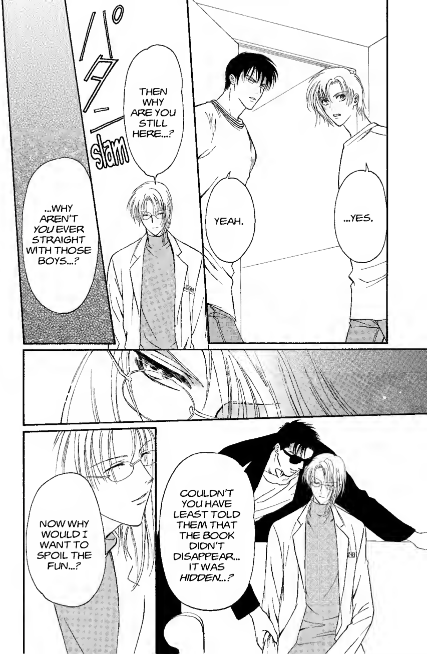

um...um... I WAS LOOKING FOR THIS, um, CHAPSTICK... BUT IN PEPPERMINT FLAVOR...?
...IT'S ON THAT SHELF.
He spoke to me!
pitter patter
He's sooooo cool!
The girls in class won't believe me!
Best day ever! Ohmigod!
"It's on that shelf." Wow. How do I get to be a smooth talker like him...?

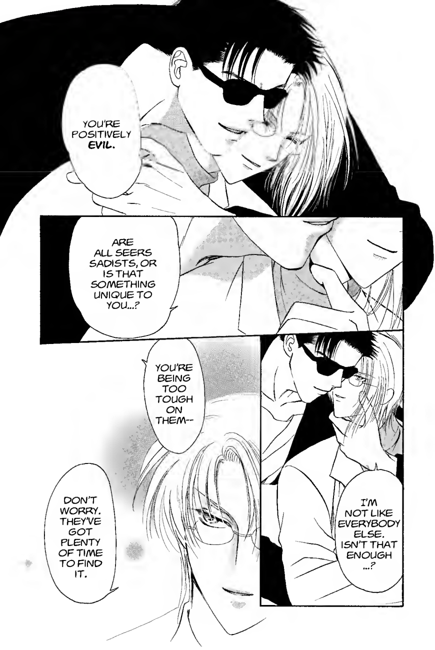

KUDO-KUN...
...I MIGHT HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA WORK FOR YOU.
INTER-ESTED ...?
YOU MEAN A...
A JOB ON THE SIDE... SO IT'S ENTIRELY OPTIONAL.

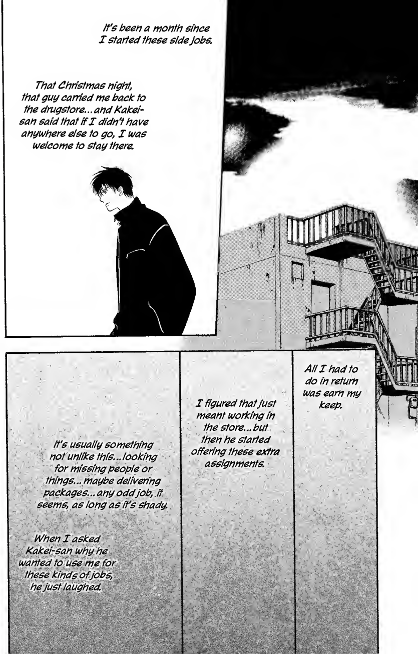

I'LL DO IT.
I NEED THE MONEY.
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
EXCELLENT... THAT'S JUST WHAT I LIKE TO HEAR. CAN YOU AND RIKUO COME TO MY OFFICE, THEN...?
Crap. Not with him.
But if Kakei-san says so...
I have to look at this as a matter of survival.
I don't want to nearly freeze to death again. If I make some cash, it means I'll be here to see another Christmas.

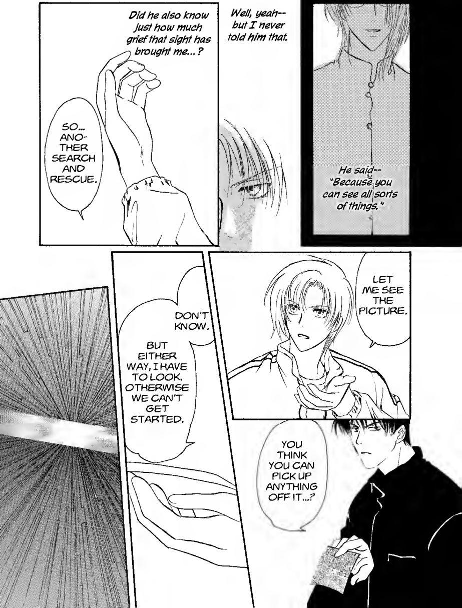

...OH! EXCUSE US...
HE'S ASLEEP AGAIN. AND STILL WEARING HIS SUNGLASSES.
DON'T MIND THE BEACHED WHALE. TAKE A SEAT.
SO, REGARDING THIS ASSIGNMENT...
...I NEED YOU TWO TO FIND SOMETHING.
FIND WHAT...?

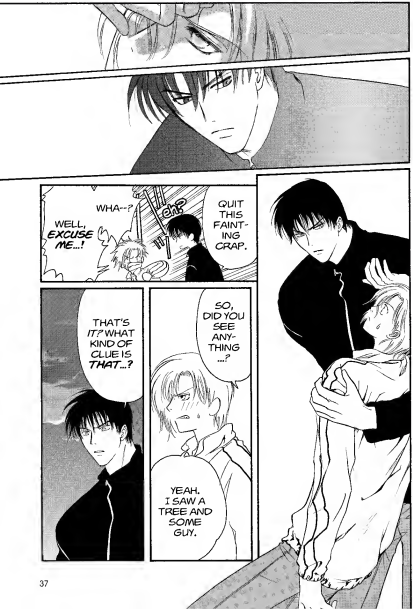

A BOOK...?
I'VE TEXT-MESSAGED ITS ORIGINAL LOCATION TO EACH OF YOUR CELL PHONES. YOU SHOULD START FROM THERE.
WHAT'S THE DEADLINE?
THE DEADLINE IS--THE SOONER THE BETTER...
...AND AS USUAL, THIS IS A MATTER OF STRICT NON-DISCLOSURE. I CANNOT DISCLOSE ANY INFORMATION ON THE BOOK OR THE CLIENT. YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EITHER.
IF YOU'RE QUESTIONED, YOU ARE **NOT** TO MENTION THE NAME OF THIS ESTABLISHMENT.
ALL EXPENSES REQUIRE RECEIPTS, AND PAYMENT IS CONDITIONAL UPON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE ASSIGNMENT.
ALL UNDERSTOOD...?

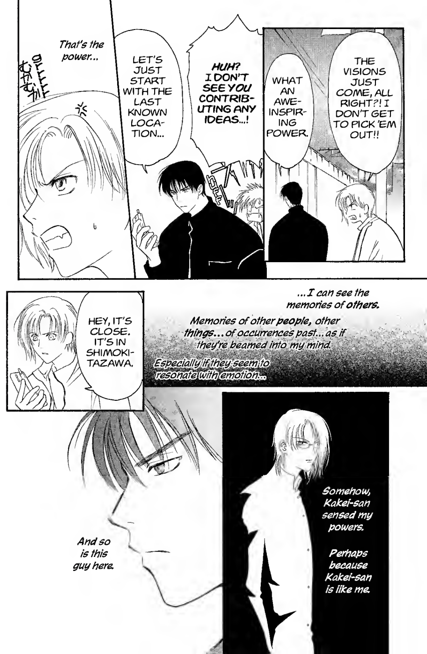

...YES.
YEAH.
THEN WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE...?
パター
slam
...WHY AREN'T *YOU* EVER STRAIGHT WITH THOSE BOYS...?
COULDN'T YOU HAVE LEAST TOLD THEM THAT THE BOOK DIDN'T DISAPPEAR... IT WAS *HIDDEN*...?
NOW WHY WOULD I WANT TO SPOIL THE FUN...?

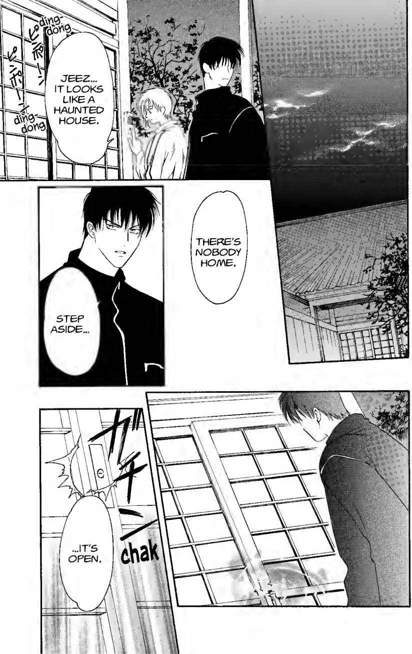

YOU'RE POSITIVELY **EVIL.**
ARE ALL SEERS SADISTS, OR IS THAT SOMETHING UNIQUE TO YOU...?
I'M NOT LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. ISN'T THAT ENOUGH ...?
YOU'RE BEING TOO TOUGH ON THEM--
DON'T WORRY. THEY'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME TO FIND IT.

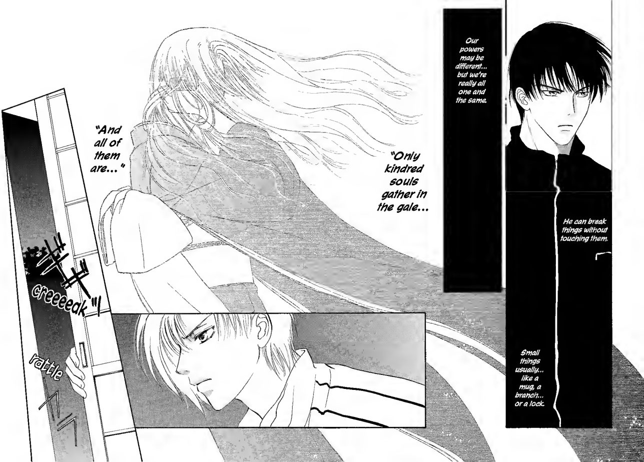

It's been a month since I started these side jobs.
That Christmas night, that guy carried me back to the drugstore... and Kakei-san said that if I didn't have anywhere else to go, I was welcome to stay there.
All I had to do in return was earn my keep.
I figured that just meant working in the store... but then he started offering these extra assignments.
It's usually something not unlike this... looking for missing people or things... maybe delivering packages... any odd job, it seems, as long as it's shady.
When I asked Kakei-san why he wanted to use me for these kinds of jobs, he just laughed.

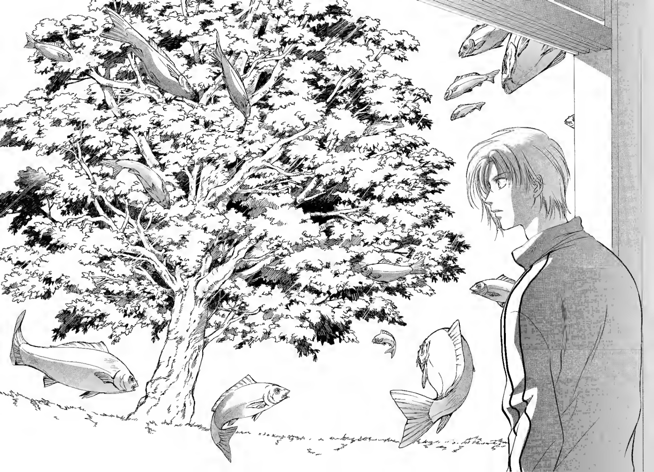

He said-- "Because you can see all sorts of things."
Well, yeah-- but I never told him that.
Did he also know just how much grief that sight has brought me...?
SO... ANOTHER SEARCH AND RESCUE.
LET ME SEE THE PICTURE.
YOU THINK YOU CAN PICK UP ANYTHING OFF IT...?
DON'T KNOW.
BUT EITHER WAY, I HAVE TO LOOK. OTHERWISE WE CAN'T GET STARTED.


QUIT THIS FAINTING CRAP.
eh?
WHA--?
WELL, EXCUSE ME...!
SO, DID YOU SEE ANYTHING ...?
YEAH. I SAW A TREE AND SOME GUY.
THAT'S IT? WHAT KIND OF CLUE IS THAT...?


THE VISIONS JUST COME, ALL RIGHT?! I DON'T GET TO PICK 'EM OUT!!
WHAT AN AWE-INSPIRING POWER.
HUH? I DON'T SEE YOU CONTRIBUTING ANY IDEAS...!
HUFF
LET'S JUST START WITH THE LAST KNOWN LOCATION...
That's the power...
GRRRR
むかむか
...I can see the memories of others.
Memories of other people, other things... of occurrences past... as if they're beamed into my mind.
Especially if they seem to resonate with emotion...
HEY, IT'S CLOSE. IT'S IN SHIMOKITAZAWA.
Somehow, Kakei-san sensed my powers.
Perhaps because Kakei-san is like me.
And so is this guy here.


ピンポーン
ding-dong
ピンポーン
ding-dong
JEEZ... IT LOOKS LIKE A HAUNTED HOUSE.
THERE'S NOBODY HOME.
STEP ASIDE...
ガチャ
chak
...IT'S OPEN.

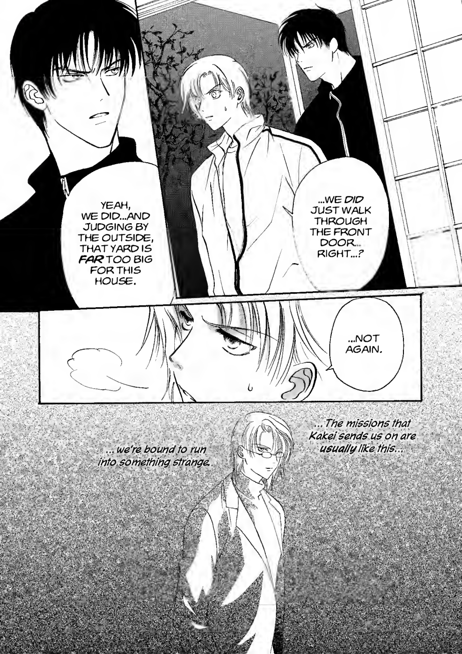

Our powers may be different... but we're really all one and the same.
He can break things without touching them.
Small things usually... like a mug, a branch... or a lock.
"Only kindred souls gather in the gale...
"And all of them are..."
creeeeak
rattle

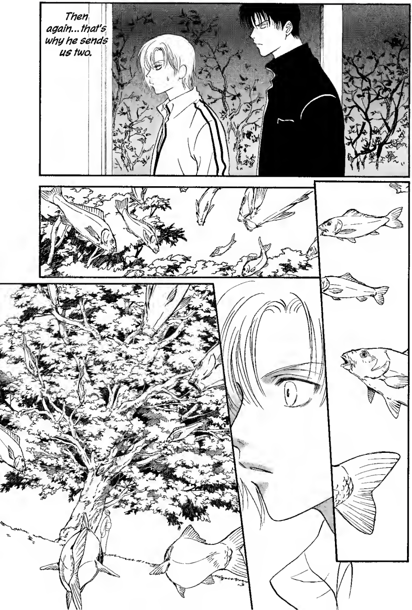


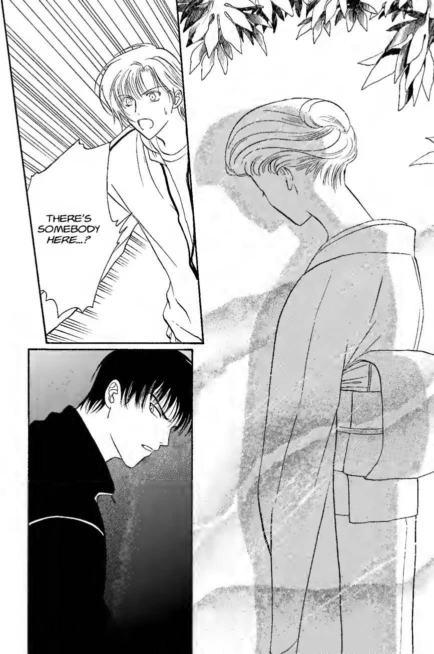
LEGAL DRUG

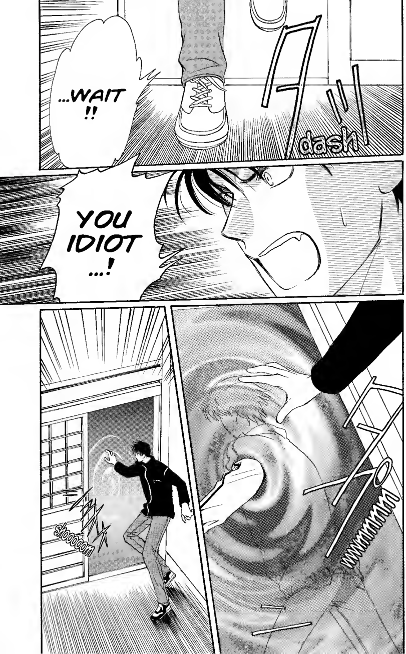
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

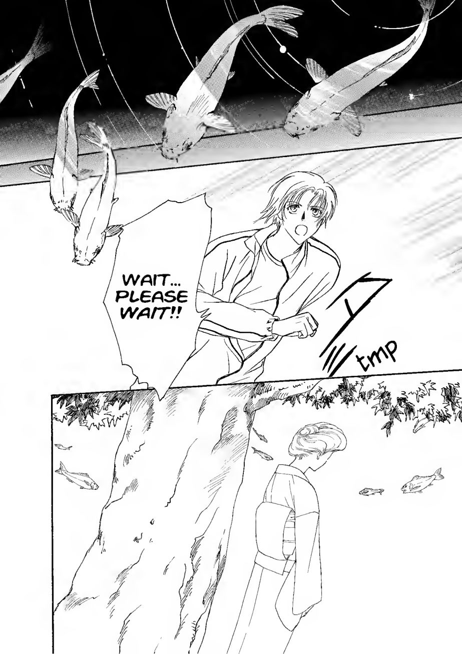
DRUG NO.02

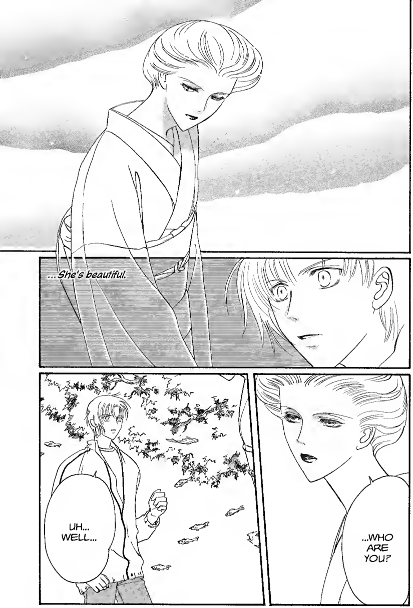

...WE *DID* JUST WALK THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR... RIGHT...?
YEAH, WE DID...AND JUDGING BY THE OUTSIDE, THAT YARD IS ***FAR*** TOO BIG FOR THIS HOUSE.
...NOT AGAIN.
*...The missions that Kakei sends us on are **usually** like this...*
...we're bound to run into something strange.

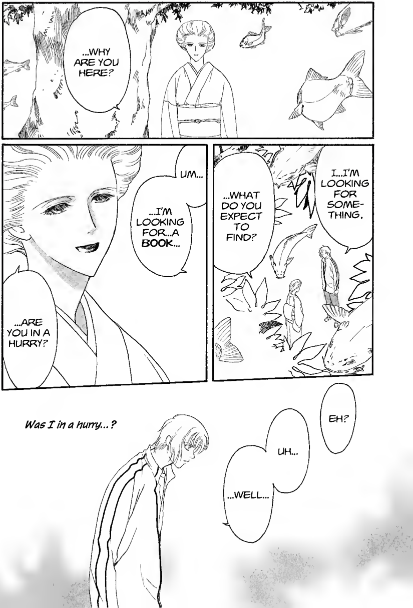

Then again...that's why he sends us two.

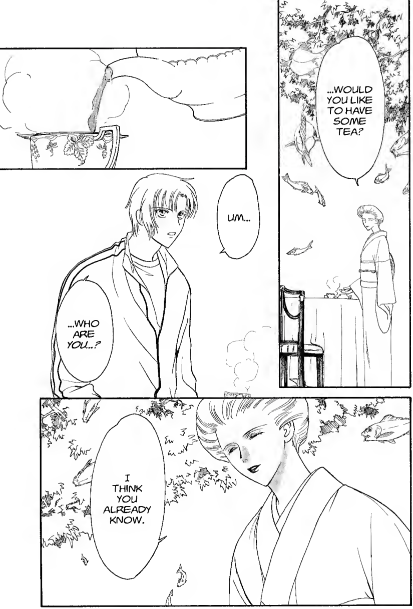

THERE'S SOMEBODY HERE...?

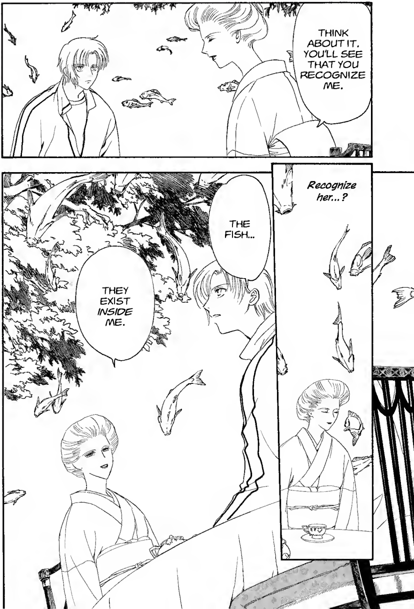

...WAIT !!
ダッ
dash
YOU IDIOT ...!
wwwmmmmmm
shoooooom

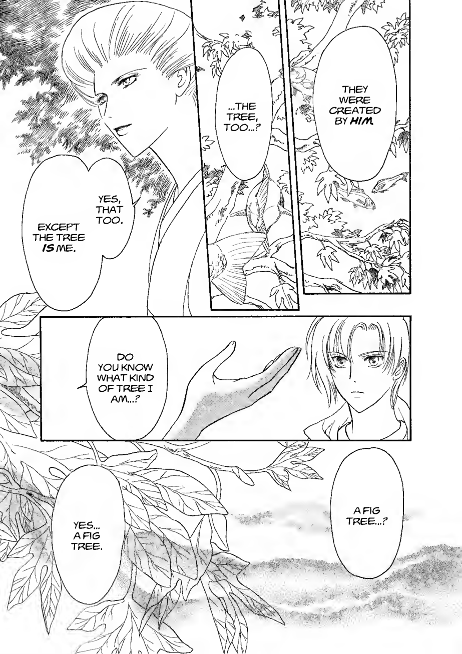

WAIT... PLEASE WAIT!!
tmp

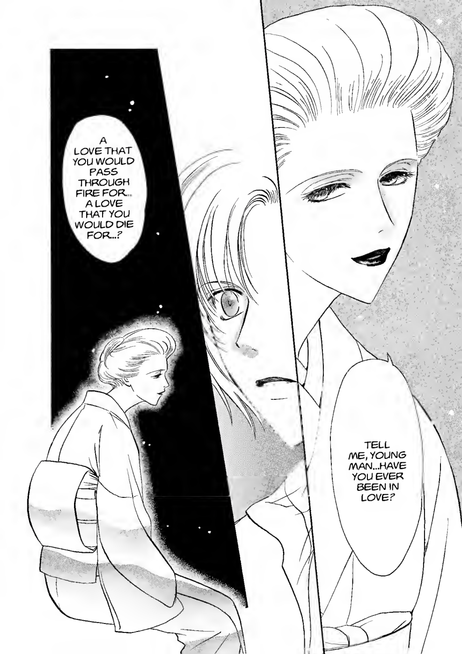

...She's beautiful.
..WHO ARE YOU?
UH... WELL...

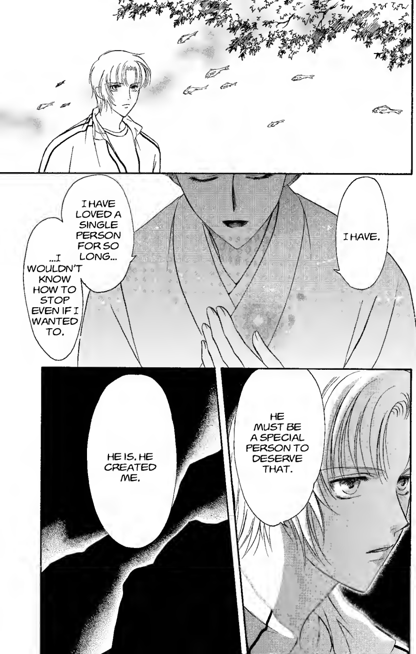

...WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I...I'M LOOKING FOR SOME-THING.
...WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO FIND?
UM...
...I'M LOOKING FOR...A **BOOK**...
...ARE YOU IN A HURRY?
EH?
UH...
...WELL...
Was I in a hurry...?

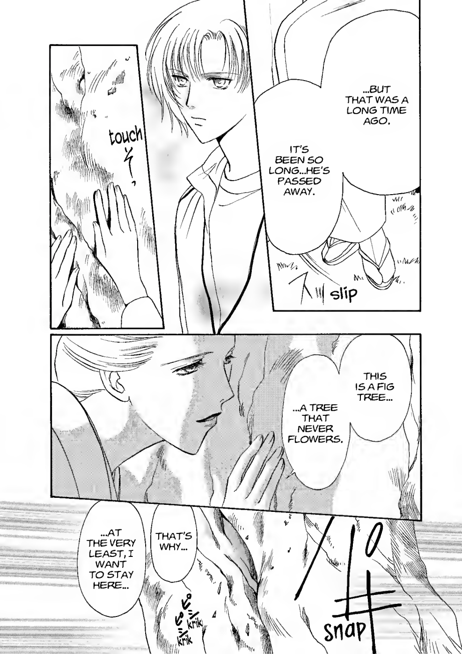

...WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE SOME TEA?
UM...
...WHO ARE YOU...?
I THINK YOU ALREADY KNOW.

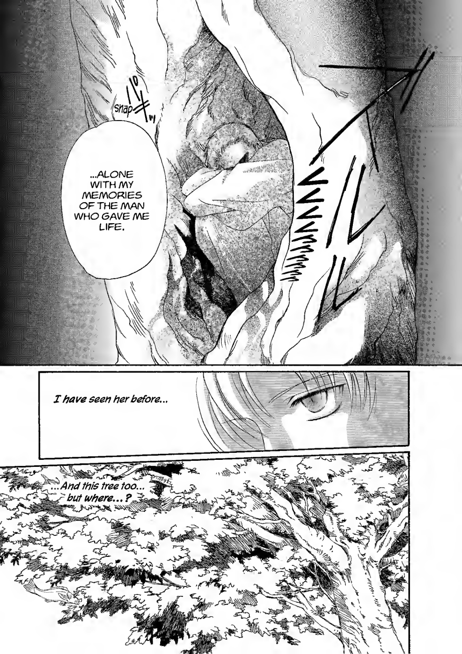

THINK ABOUT IT. YOU'LL SEE THAT YOU RECOGNIZE ME.
Recognize her...?
THE FISH...
THEY EXIST *INSIDE* ME.

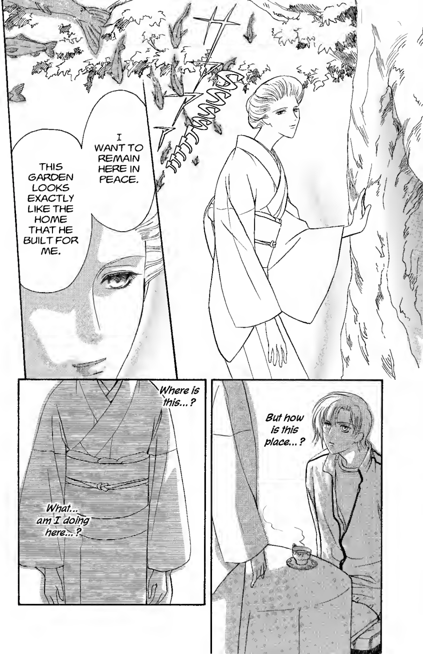

THEY WERE CREATED BY *HIM*.
...THE TREE, TOO...?
YES, THAT TOO.
EXCEPT THE TREE *IS* ME.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF TREE I AM...?
A FIG TREE...?
YES... A FIG TREE.

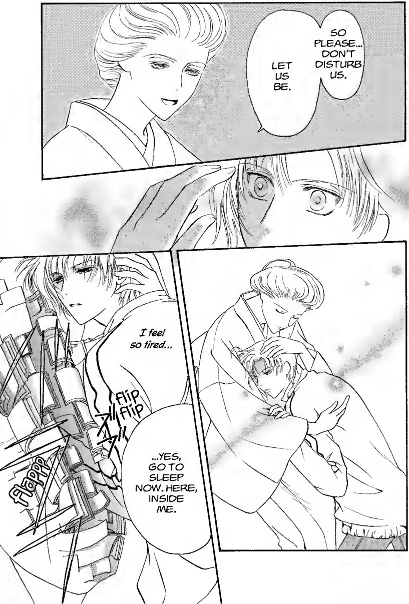

TELL ME, YOUNG MAN...HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN LOVE?
A LOVE THAT YOU WOULD PASS THROUGH FIRE FOR... A LOVE THAT YOU WOULD DIE FOR...?

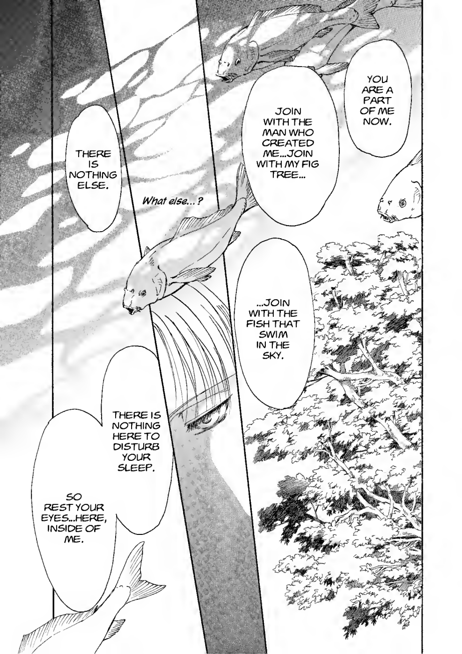

I HAVE.
I HAVE LOVED A SINGLE PERSON FOR SO LONG...
...I WOULDN'T KNOW HOW TO STOP EVEN IF I WANTED TO.
HE MUST BE A SPECIAL PERSON TO DESERVE THAT.
HE IS. HE CREATED ME.

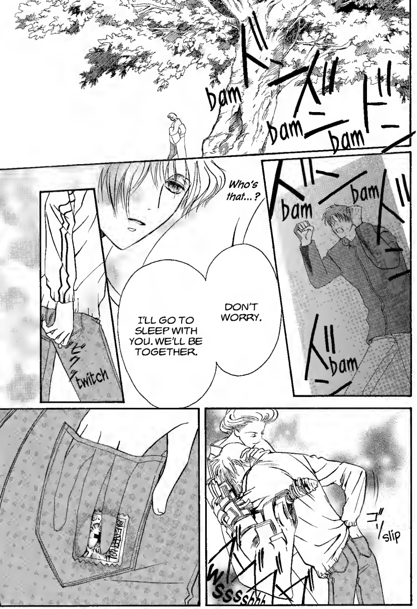

...BUT THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG...HE'S PASSED AWAY.
slip
touch
THIS IS A FIG TREE...
...A TREE THAT NEVER FLOWERS.
snap
THAT'S WHY...
...AT THE VERY LEAST, I WANT TO STAY HERE...
krik
krik

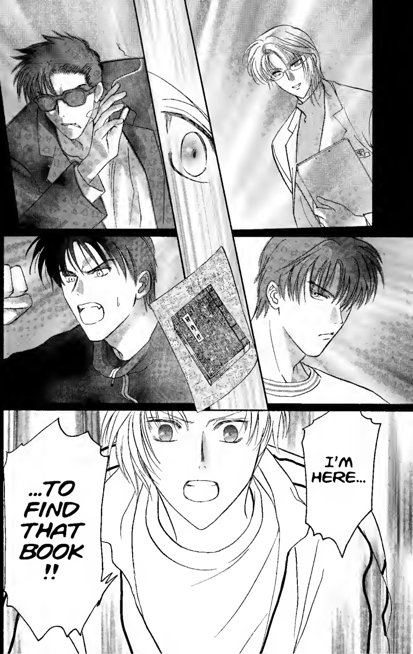

snap
...ALONE WITH MY MEMORIES OF THE MAN WHO GAVE ME LIFE.
I have seen her before...
...And this tree too... but where...?

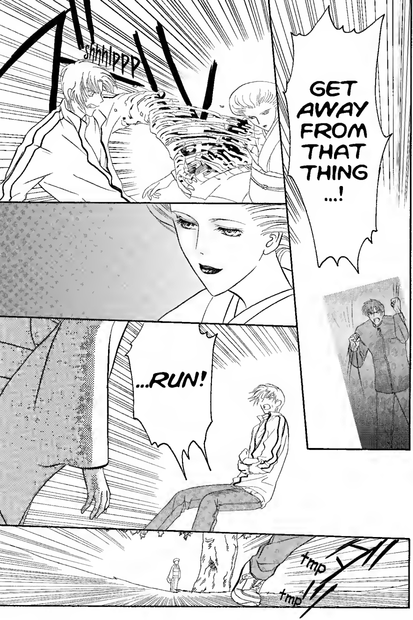

I WANT TO REMAIN HERE IN PEACE.
THIS GARDEN LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE THE HOME THAT HE BUILT FOR ME.
But how is this place...?
Where is this...?
What... am I doing here...?

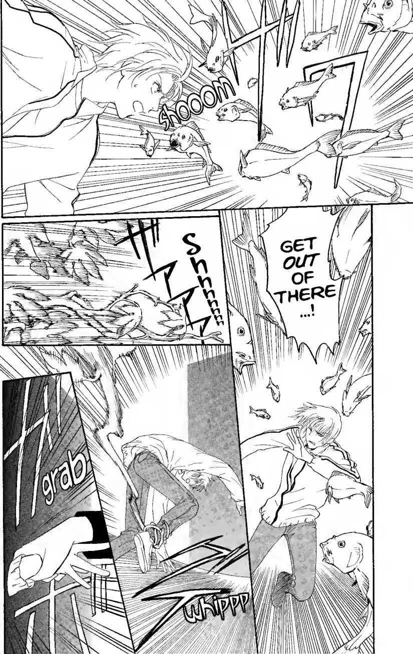

SO PLEASE... DON'T DISTURB US.
LET US BE.
I feel so tired...
Flip Flip
Flapp
...YES, GO TO SLEEP NOW. HERE, INSIDE ME.

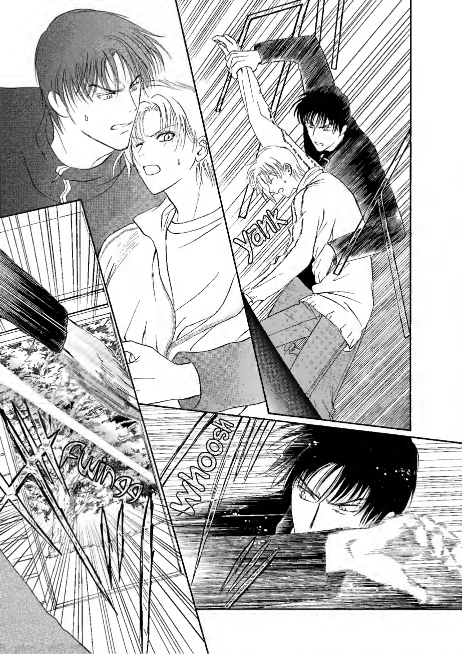

YOU ARE A PART OF ME NOW.
JOIN WITH THE MAN WHO CREATED ME...JOIN WITH MY FIG TREE...
...JOIN WITH THE FISH THAT SWIM IN THE SKY.
What else...?
THERE IS NOTHING ELSE.
THERE IS NOTHING HERE TO DISTURB YOUR SLEEP.
SO REST YOUR EYES...HERE, INSIDE OF ME.

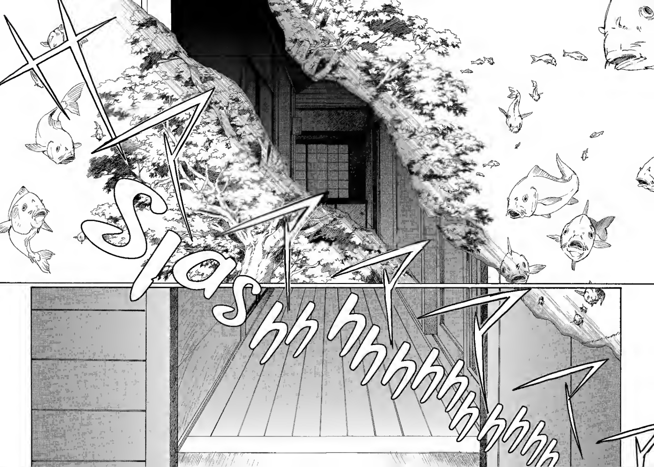

bam
bam
bam
bam
bam
Who's that...?
DON'T WORRY.
I'LL GO TO SLEEP WITH YOU. WE'LL BE TOGETHER.
bam
twitch
slip
Wssssshhh

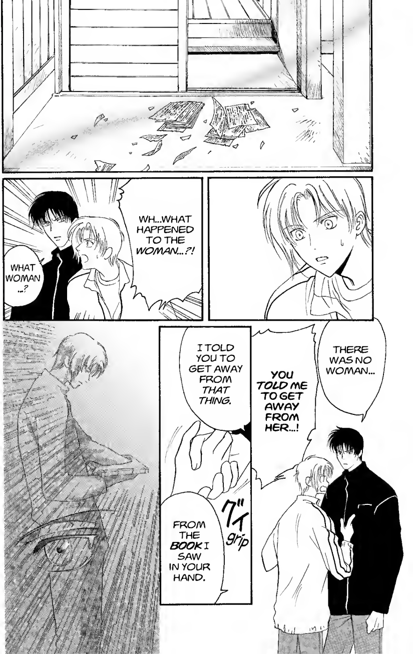

I'M HERE...
...TO FIND THAT BOOK!!

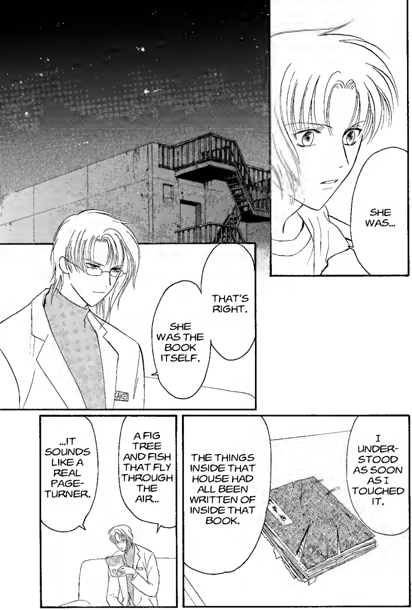

GET AWAY FROM THAT THING ...!
shhhlppp
...RUN!
tmp
tmp

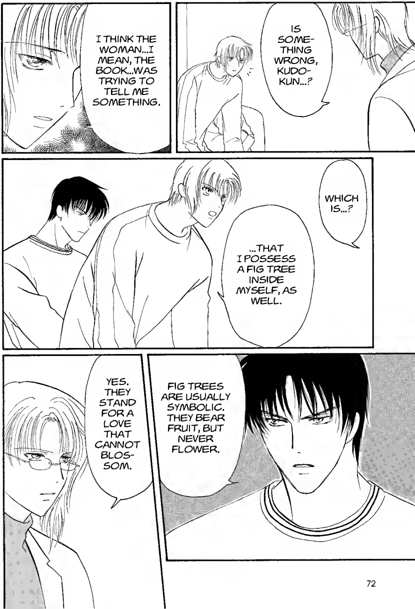

shooom
GET OUT OF THERE ...!
Shhhhhhh
grab
whippp

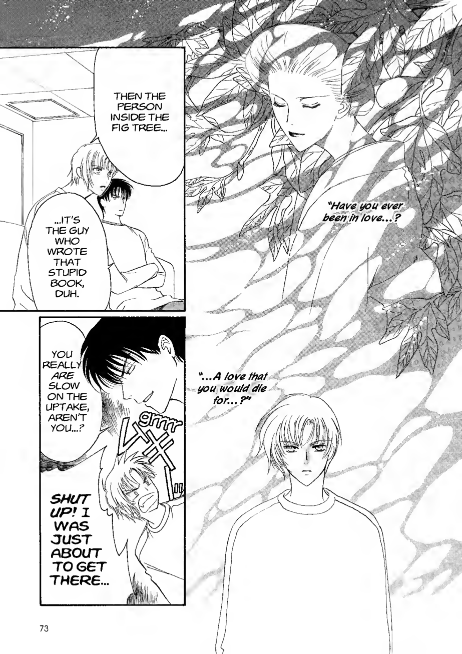

yank
whoosh
fwingg

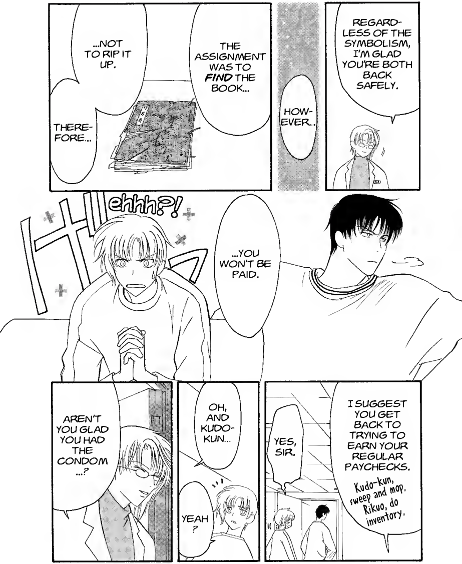

サアアアアアア
Slashhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

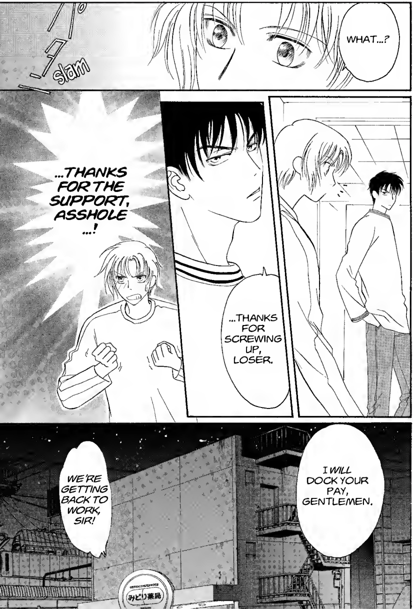

WH...WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *WOMAN*...?!
WHAT WOMAN ...?
THERE WAS NO WOMAN...
YOU TOLD ME TO GET AWAY FROM HER...!
I TOLD YOU TO GET AWAY FROM *THAT THING*.
グイ grip
FROM THE *BOOK* I SAW IN YOUR HAND.


SHE WAS...
THAT'S RIGHT.
SHE WAS THE BOOK ITSELF.
AKEI
I UNDERSTOOD AS SOON AS I TOUCHED IT.
THE THINGS INSIDE THAT HOUSE HAD ALL BEEN WRITTEN OF INSIDE THAT BOOK.
A FIG TREE AND FISH THAT FLY THROUGH THE AIR...
...IT SOUNDS LIKE A REAL PAGE-TURNER.


IS SOMETHING WRONG, KUDO-KUN...?
I THINK THE WOMAN...I MEAN, THE BOOK...WAS TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING.
WHICH IS...?
...THAT I POSSESS A FIG TREE INSIDE MYSELF, AS WELL.
FIG TREES ARE USUALLY SYMBOLIC. THEY BEAR FRUIT, BUT NEVER FLOWER.
YES. THEY STAND FOR A LOVE THAT CANNOT BLOSSOM.


"Have you ever been in love...?
"...A love that you would die for...?"
THEN THE PERSON INSIDE THE FIG TREE...
...IT'S THE GUY WHO WROTE THAT STUPID BOOK, DUH.
YOU REALLY ARE SLOW ON THE UPTAKE, AREN'T YOU...?
grrrr
SHUT UP! I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GET THERE...

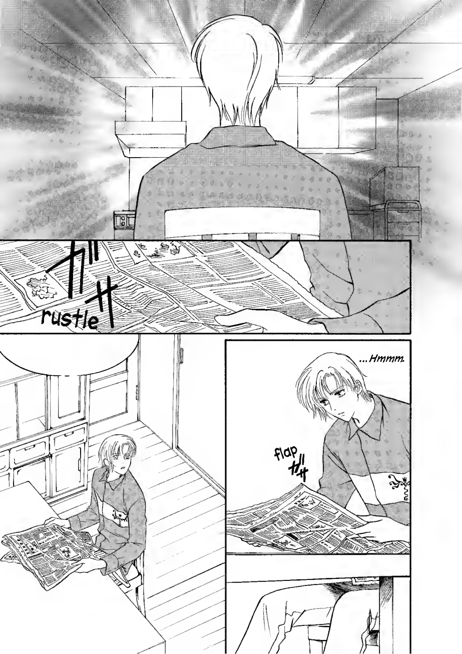

REGARDLESS OF THE SYMBOLISM, I'M GLAD YOU'RE BOTH BACK SAFELY.
HOWEVER...
THE ASSIGNMENT WAS TO *FIND* THE BOOK...
...NOT TO RIP IT UP.
THEREFORE...
...YOU WON'T BE PAID.
ehhh?!
I SUGGEST YOU GET BACK TO TRYING TO EARN YOUR REGULAR PAYCHECKS.
Kudo-kun, sweep and mop, Rikuo, do inventory.
YES, SIR.
OH, AND KUDO-KUN...
YEAH?
AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU HAD THE CONDOM...?

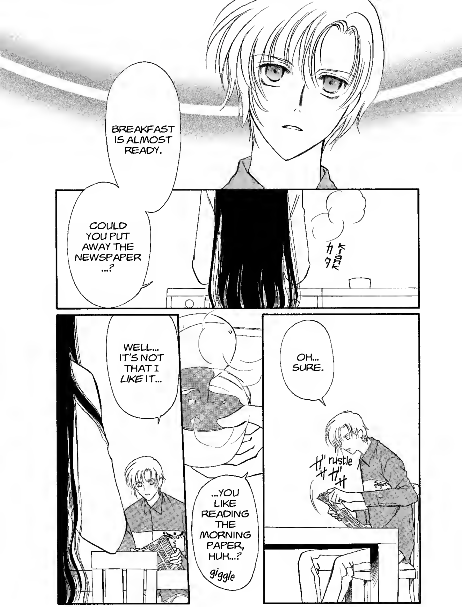

WHAT...?
パタン
slam
...THANKS FOR SCREWING UP, LOSER.
...THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT, ASSHOLE ...!
I WILL DOCK YOUR PAY, GENTLEMEN.
WE'RE GETTING BACK TO WORK, SIR!
みどり薬局

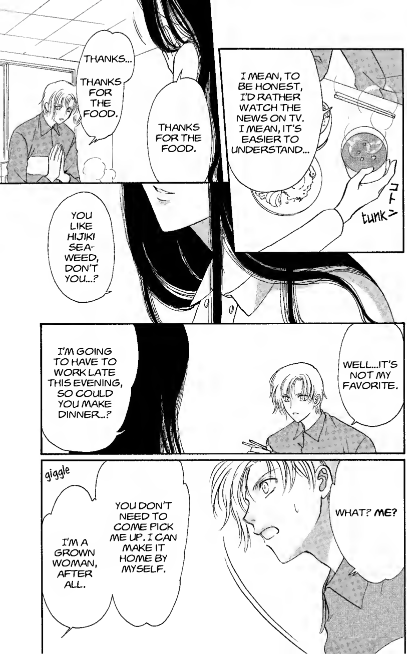
LEGAL DRUG

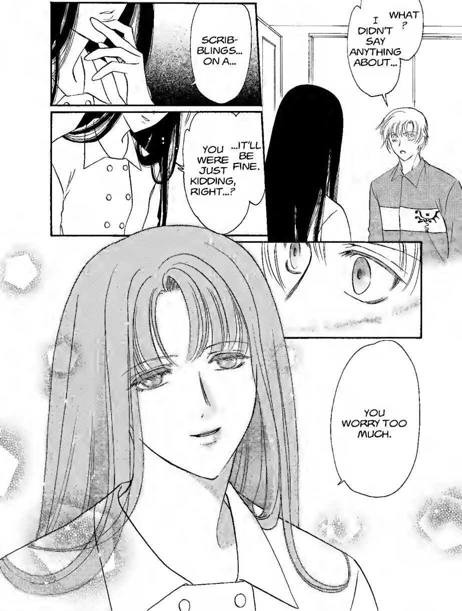
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

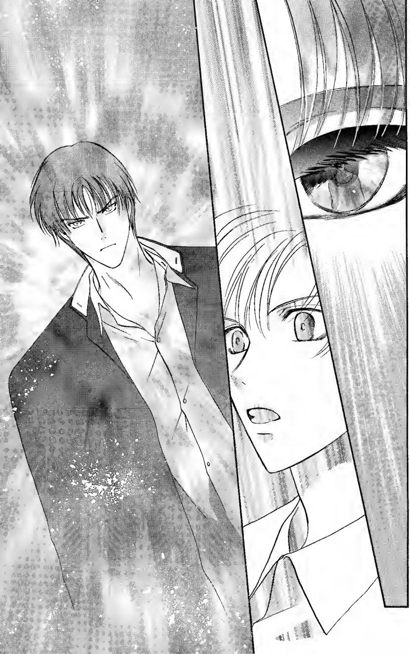
DRUG NO.03

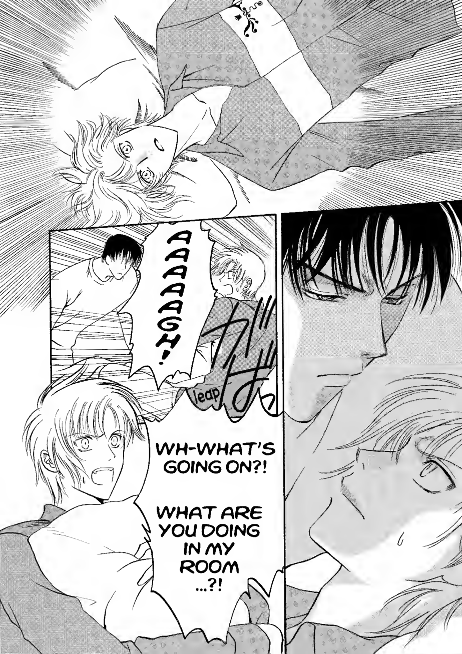

ガサ
rustle
...Hmmm.
flap
ガサ

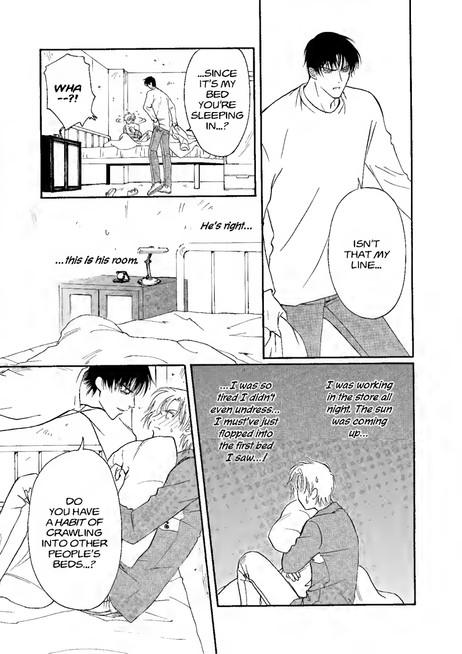

BREAKFAST IS ALMOST READY.
COULD YOU PUT AWAY THE NEWSPAPER ...?
カタ klank
OH... SURE.
ザッ rustle ザザッ
...YOU LIKE READING THE MORNING PAPER, HUH...?
giggle
WELL... IT'S NOT THAT I *LIKE* IT...

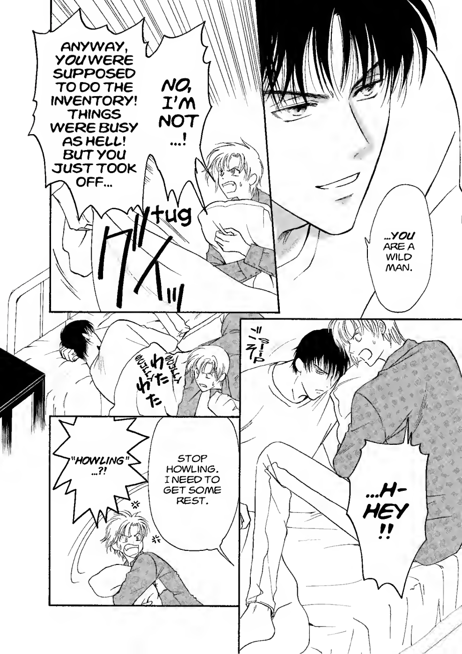

I MEAN, TO BE HONEST, I'D RATHER WATCH THE NEWS ON TV. I MEAN, IT'S EASIER TO UNDERSTAND...
コト
tunk
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
THANKS... THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
YOU LIKE HIJIKI SEA-WEED, DON'T YOU...?
WELL...IT'S NOT MY FAVORITE.
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO WORK LATE THIS EVENING, SO COULD YOU MAKE DINNER...?
WHAT? **ME?**
YOU DON'T NEED TO COME PICK ME UP. I CAN MAKE IT HOME BY MYSELF.
I'M A GROWN WOMAN, AFTER ALL.
giggle

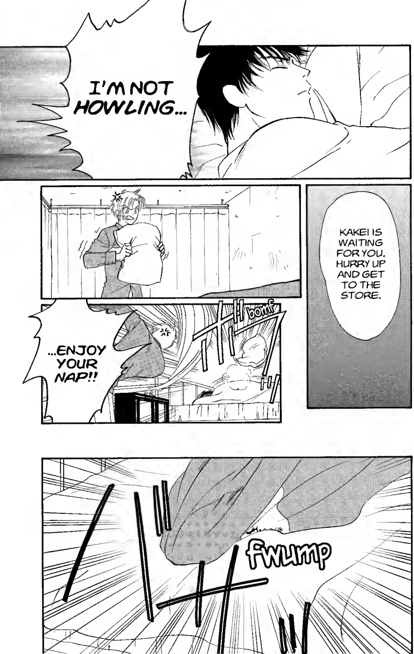

WHAT? I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT...
SCRIBBLINGS... ON A...
...IT'LL BE FINE.
YOU WERE JUST KIDDING, RIGHT...?
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH.

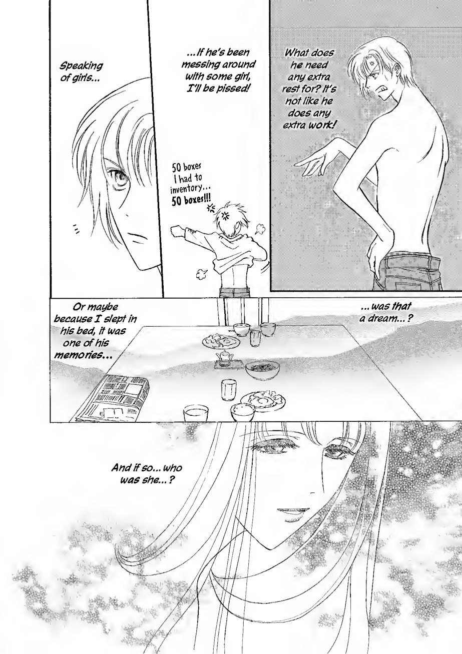


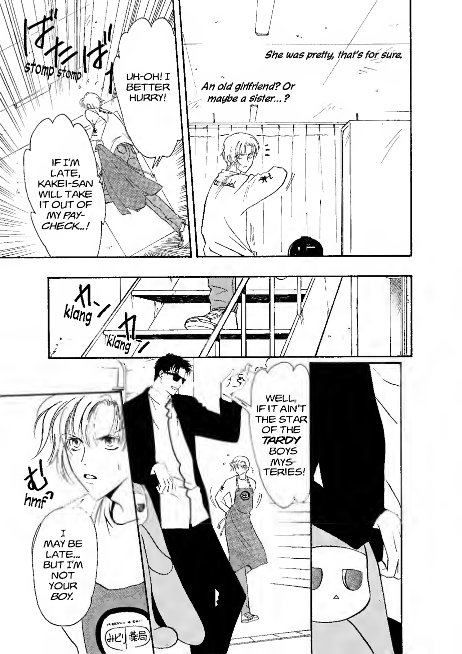

AAAAAGH!
ガバッ
leap
WH-WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM ...?!

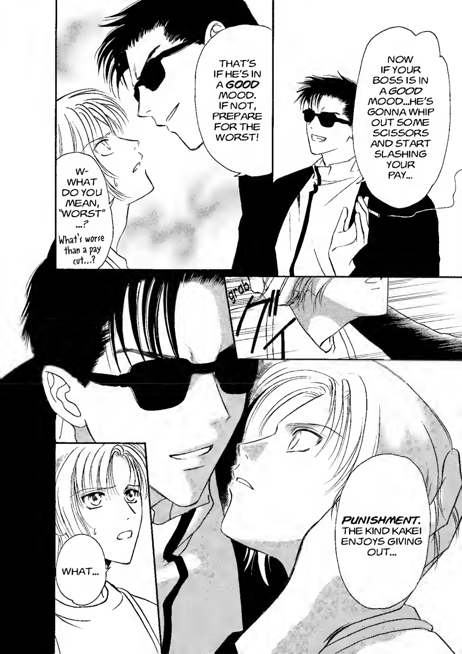

ISN'T THAT *MY* LINE...
...SINCE IT'S *MY* BED YOU'RE SLEEPING IN...?
WHA --?!
He's right...
...this is his room.
I was working in the store all night. The sun was coming up...
...I was so tired I didn't even undress... I must've just flopped into the first bed I saw...!
DO YOU HAVE A *HABIT* OF CRAWLING INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S BEDS...?

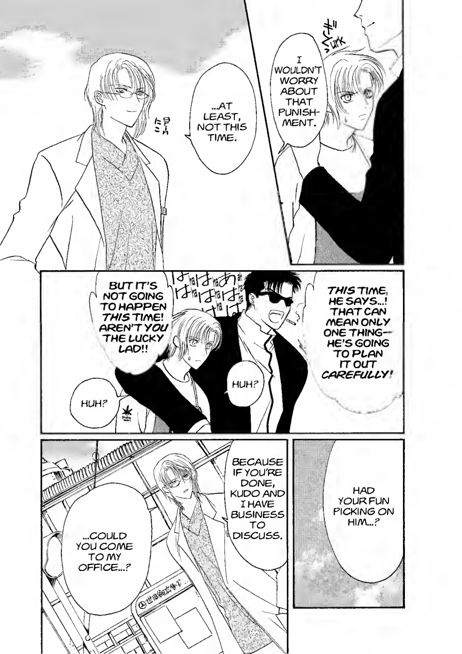

...YOU ARE A WILD MAN.
NO, I'M NOT ...!
ANYWAY, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DO THE INVENTORY! THINGS WERE BUSY AS HELL! BUT YOU JUST TOOK OFF...
グイッ
tug
ズリッ
SLIP
...H-HEY!!
わたわた
SCUFFLE
SCUFFLE
STOP HOWLING. I NEED TO GET SOME REST.
"HOWLING" ...?!

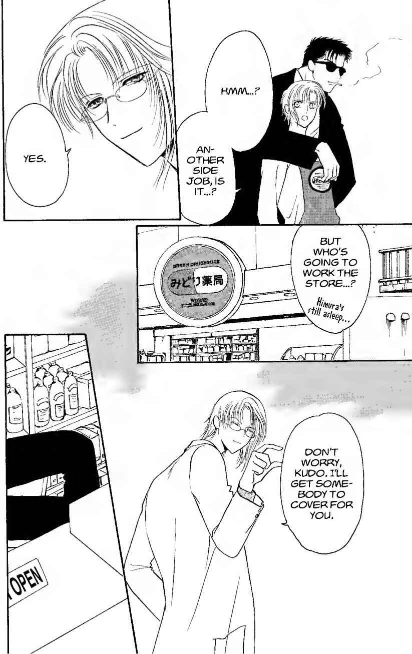

I'M NOT HOWLING...
KAKEI IS WAITING FOR YOU. HURRY UP AND GET TO THE STORE.
bomf
...ENJOY YOUR NAP!!
fwump

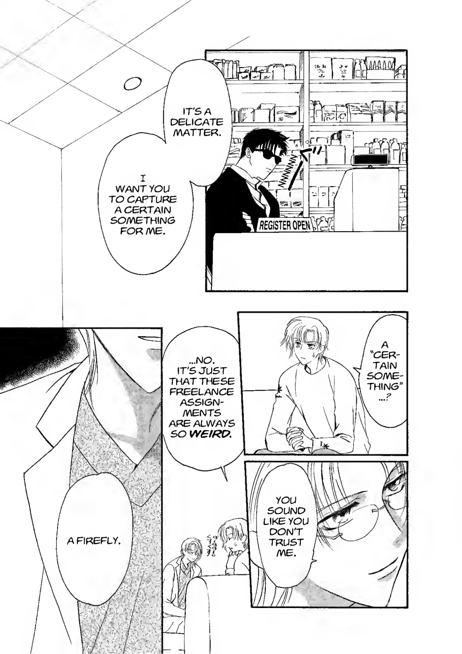

What does he need any extra rest for? It's not like he does any extra work!
...If he's been messing around with some girl, I'll be pissed!
50 boxes I had to inventory... 50 boxes!!!
Speaking of girls...
...was that a dream...?
Or maybe because I slept in his bed, it was one of his memories...
And if so... who was she...?

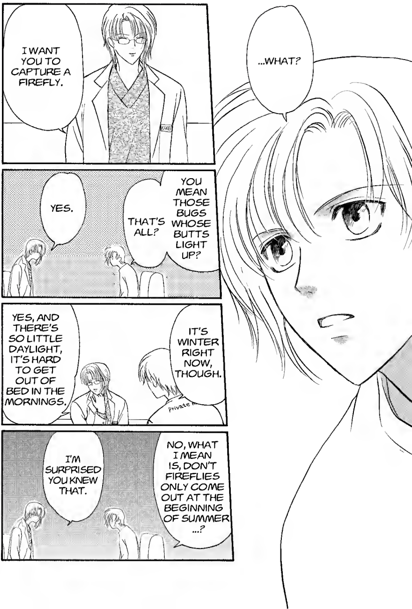

She was pretty, that's for sure.
An old girlfriend? Or maybe a sister...?
te model
ばたばた
stomp stomp
UH-OH! I BETTER HURRY!
IF I'M LATE, KAKEI-SAN WILL TAKE IT OUT OF MY PAYCHECK...!
カン
klang
カン
klang
WELL, IF IT AIN'T THE STAR OF THE *TARDY* BOYS MYSTERIES!
む
hmf
I MAY BE LATE... BUT I'M NOT YOUR *BOY.*
みどり薬局

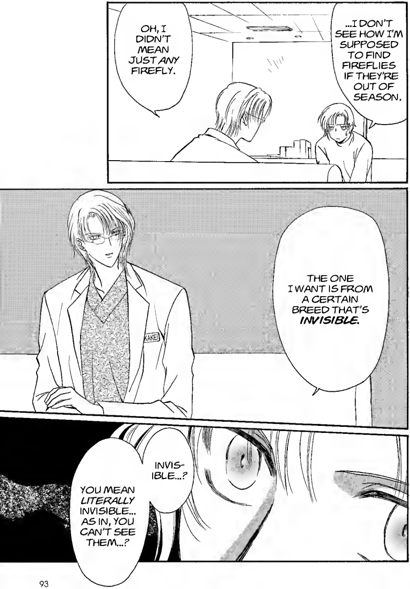

NOW IF YOUR BOSS IS IN A *GOOD* MOOD...HE'S GONNA WHIP OUT SOME SCISSORS AND START SLASHING YOUR PAY...
THAT'S IF HE'S IN A ***GOOD*** MOOD. IF NOT, PREPARE FOR THE WORST!
W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WORST" ...?
What's worse than a pay cut...?
grab
PUNISHMENT. THE KIND KAKEI ENJOYS GIVING OUT...
WHAT...

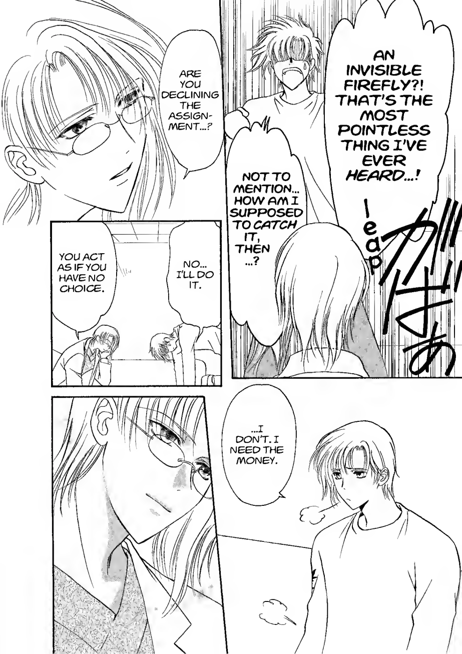

ギ urk
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT PUNISHMENT.
にこ grin
...AT LEAST, NOT THIS TIME.
THIS TIME, HE SAYS...! THAT CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING— HE'S GOING TO PLAN IT OUT CAREFULLY!
あはははは ha ha ha ha
HUH?
BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN THIS TIME! AREN'T YOU THE LUCKY LAD!!
HUH?
HAD YOUR FUN PICKING ON HIM...?
BECAUSE IF YOU'RE DONE, KUDO AND I HAVE BUSINESS TO DISCUSS.
...COULD YOU COME TO MY OFFICE...?

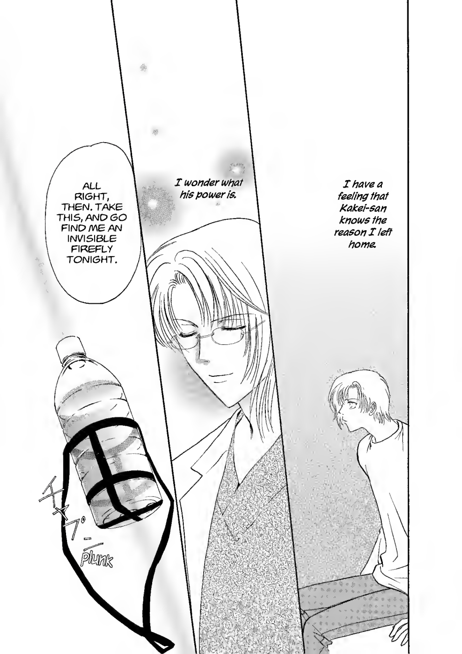

HMM...?
AN-OTHER SIDE JOB, IS IT...?
YES.
BUT WHO'S GOING TO WORK THE STORE...?
Himura's still asleep...
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
DON'T WORRY, KUDO. I'LL GET SOMEBODY TO COVER FOR YOU.
OPEN

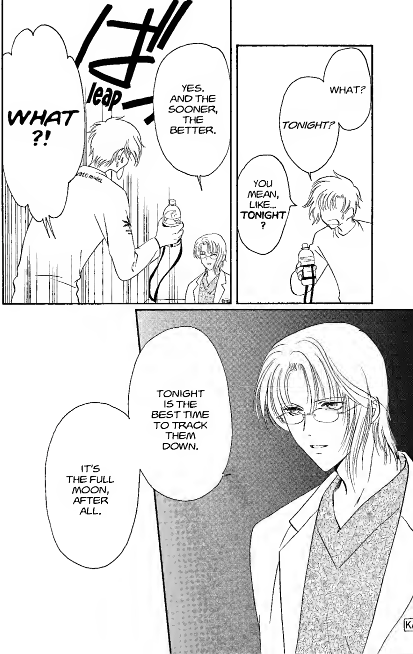

IT'S A DELICATE MATTER.
I WANT YOU TO CAPTURE A CERTAIN SOMETHING FOR ME.
NNNNN
REGISTER OPEN
A "CERTAIN SOMETHING" ...?
...NO. IT'S JUST THAT THESE FREELANCE ASSIGNMENTS ARE ALWAYS SO WEIRD.
YOU SOUND LIKE YOU DON'T TRUST ME.
giggle くすくす
A FIREFLY.

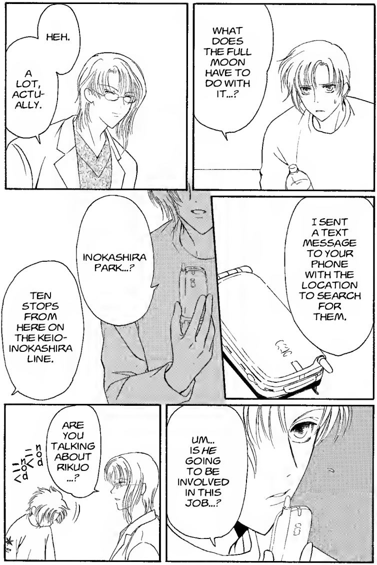

I WANT YOU TO CAPTURE A FIREFLY.
KAKEI
...WHAT?
YOU MEAN THOSE BUGS WHOSE BUTTS LIGHT UP?
THAT'S ALL?
YES.
IT'S WINTER RIGHT NOW, THOUGH.
Private
YES, AND THERE'S SO LITTLE DAYLIGHT, IT'S HARD TO GET OUT OF BED IN THE MORNINGS.
NO, WHAT I MEAN IS, DON'T FIREFLIES ONLY COME OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER ...?
I'M SURPRISED YOU KNEW THAT.

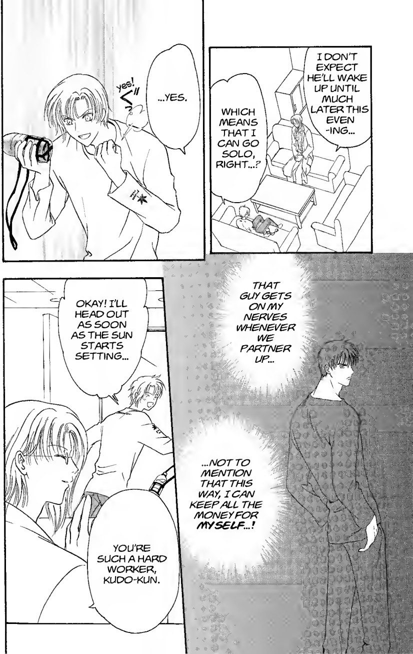

...I DON'T SEE HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO FIND FIREFLIES IF THEY'RE OUT OF SEASON.
OH, I DIDN'T MEAN JUST *ANY* FIREFLY.
KAKEI
THE ONE I WANT IS FROM A CERTAIN BREED THAT'S ***INVISIBLE***.
INVISIBLE...?
YOU MEAN *LITERALLY* INVISIBLE... AS IN, YOU CAN'T SEE THEM...?

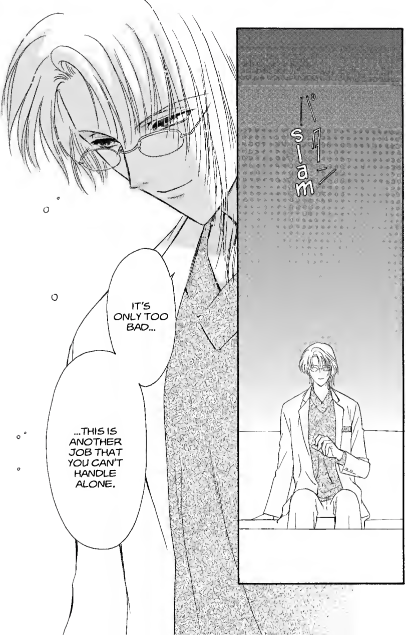

AN INVISIBLE FIREFLY?! THAT'S THE MOST POINTLESS THING I'VE EVER HEARD...!
leap
ガばあ
NOT TO MENTION... HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO CATCH IT, THEN ...?
ARE YOU DECLINING THE ASSIGNMENT...?
NO... I'LL DO IT.
YOU ACT AS IF YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.
...I DON'T. I NEED THE MONEY.

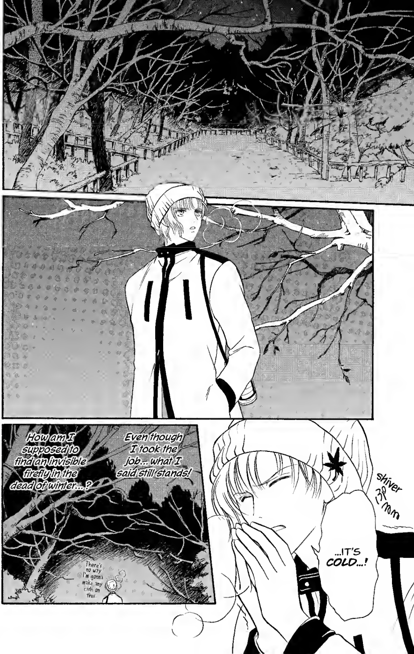

I have a feeling that Kakei-san knows the reason I left home.
I wonder what his power is.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. TAKE THIS, AND GO FIND ME AN INVISIBLE FIREFLY TONIGHT.
チャプ
plunk

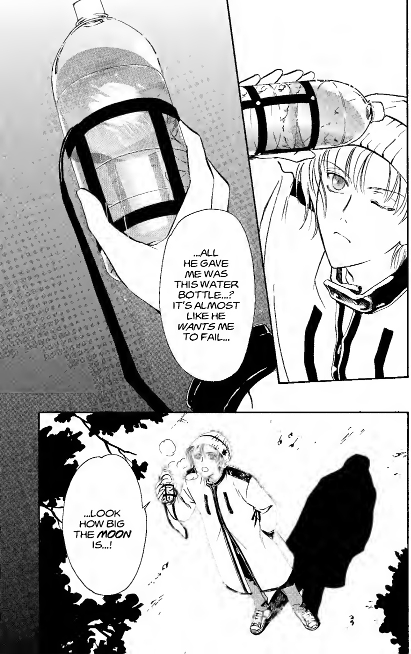

WHAT? TONIGHT?
YOU MEAN, LIKE... TONIGHT?
YES. AND THE SOONER, THE BETTER.
ば
leap
WHAT?!
TONIGHT IS THE BEST TIME TO TRACK THEM DOWN.
IT'S THE FULL MOON, AFTER ALL.

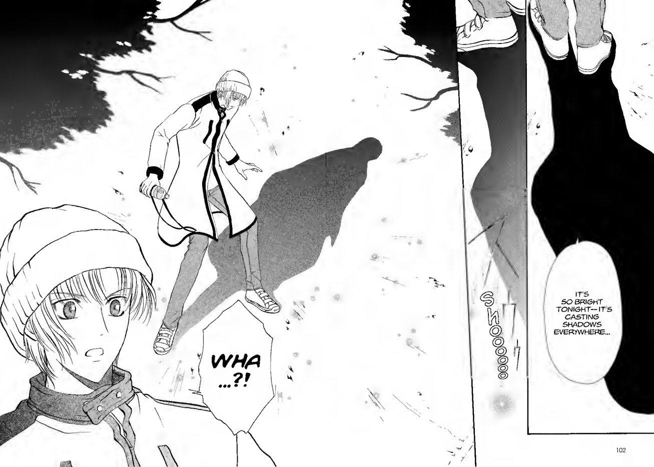

WHAT DOES THE FULL MOON HAVE TO DO WITH IT...?
HEH.
A LOT, ACTUALLY.
I SENT A TEXT MESSAGE TO YOUR PHONE WITH THE LOCATION TO SEARCH FOR THEM.
INOKASHIRA PARK...?
TEN STOPS FROM HERE ON THE KEIO-INOKASHIRA LINE.
UM... IS *HE* GOING TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS JOB...?
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT RIKUO ...?
pou
pou


I DON'T EXPECT HE'LL WAKE UP UNTIL MUCH LATER THIS EVENING...
WHICH MEANS THAT I CAN GO SOLO, RIGHT...?
yes!
...YES.
THAT GUY GETS ON MY NERVES WHENEVER WE PARTNER UP...
...NOT TO MENTION THAT THIS WAY, I CAN KEEP ALL THE MONEY FOR MYSELF...!
OKAY! I'LL HEAD OUT AS SOON AS THE SUN STARTS SETTING...
YOU'RE SUCH A HARD WORKER, KUDO-KUN.


パタン
slam
IT'S ONLY TOO BAD...
...THIS IS ANOTHER JOB THAT YOU CAN'T HANDLE ALONE.


Even though I took the job... what I said still stands!
How am I supposed to find an invisible firefly in the dead of winter...?
There's no way I'm gonna make any cash on this.
shiver
...IT'S COLD...!

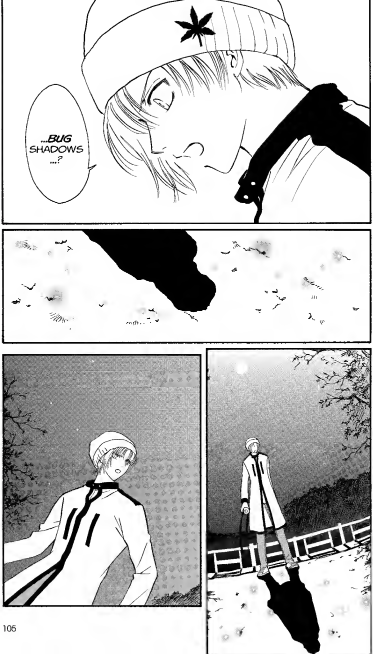

...ALL HE GAVE ME WAS THIS WATER BOTTLE...? IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE *WANTS* ME TO FAIL...
...LOOK HOW BIG THE ***MOON*** IS...!

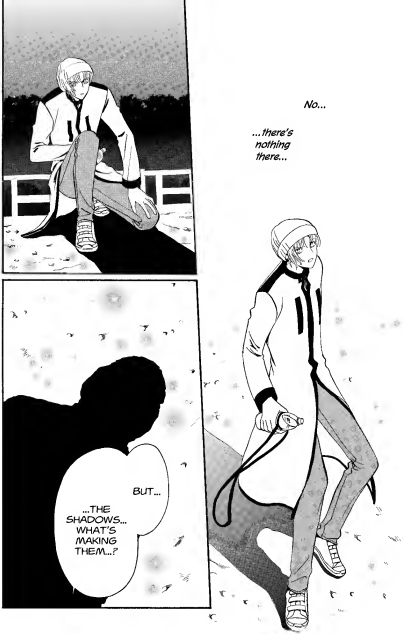

IT'S SO BRIGHT TONIGHT--IT'S CASTING SHADOWS EVERYWHERE...
SHOOOOOO
WHA ...?!

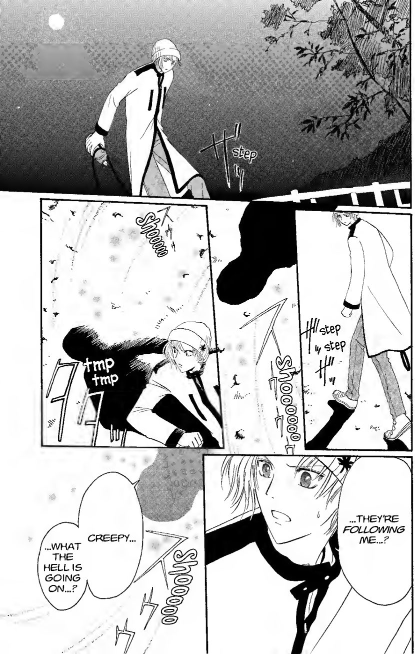
LEGAL DRUG

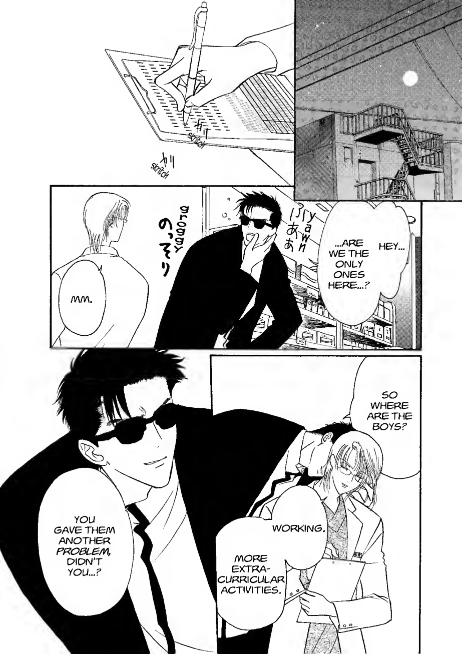
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

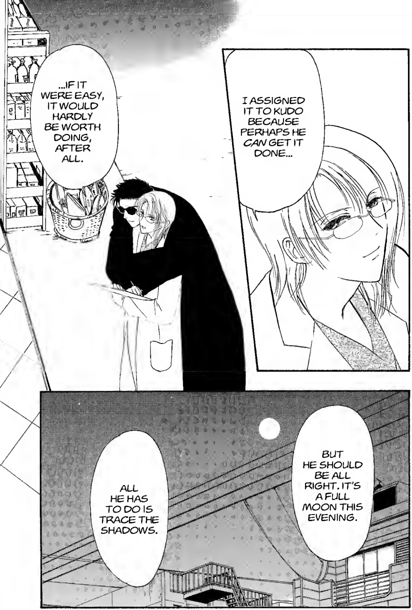
DRUG NO.04

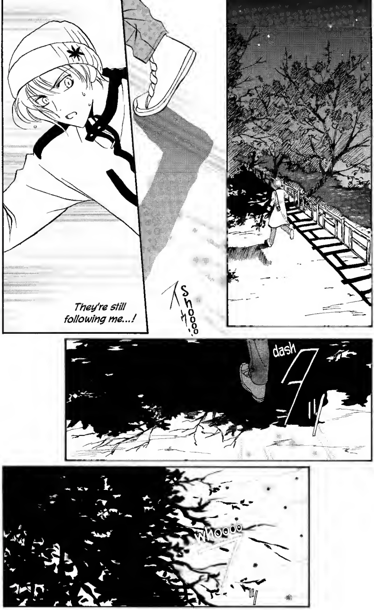

...**BUG** SHADOWS ...?

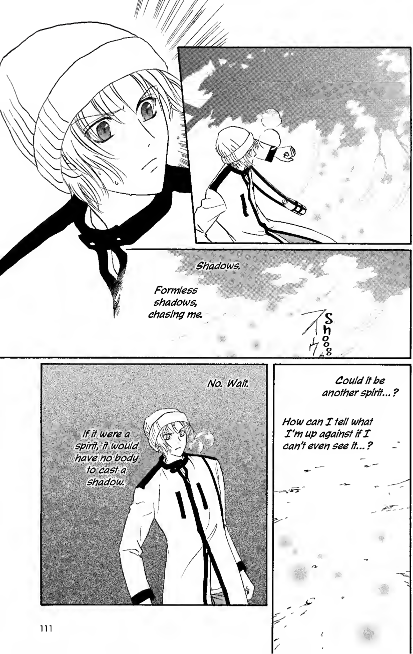

No...
...there's nothing there...
BUT... ...THE SHADOWS... WHAT'S MAKING THEM...?

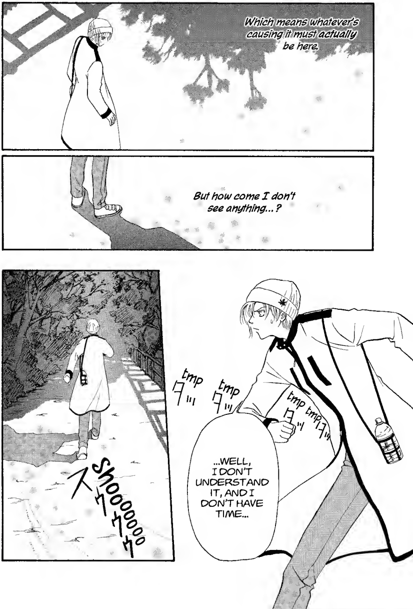

step
step step
Shooooo
tmp tmp
Shoooooo
...THEY'RE FOLLOWING ME...?
CREEPY...
...WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON...?
Shoooooo

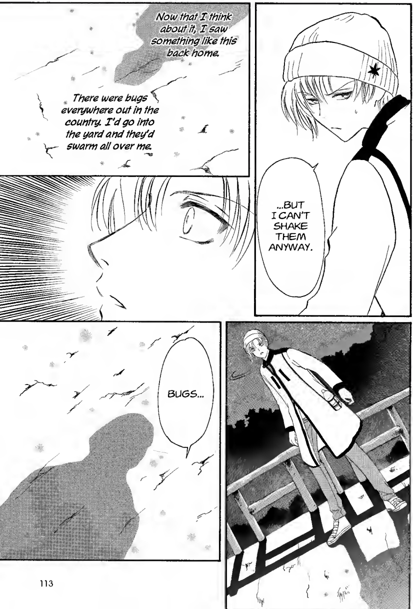

カリ skritch
カリ skritch
HEY...
...ARE WE THE ONLY ONES HERE...?
ふああ yawn
のっそり groggy
MM.
SO WHERE ARE THE BOYS?
WORKING.
MORE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.
YOU GAVE THEM ANOTHER *PROBLEM*, DIDN'T YOU...?

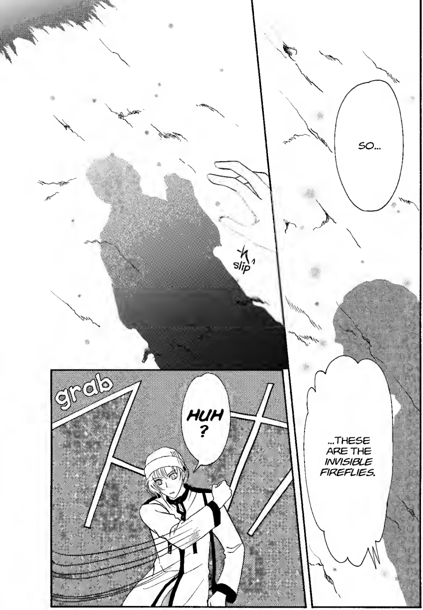

I ASSIGNED IT TO KUDO BECAUSE PERHAPS HE *CAN* GET IT DONE...
...IF IT WERE EASY, IT WOULD HARDLY BE WORTH DOING, AFTER ALL.
BUT HE SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT. IT'S A FULL MOON THIS EVENING.
ALL HE HAS TO DO IS TRACE THE SHADOWS.

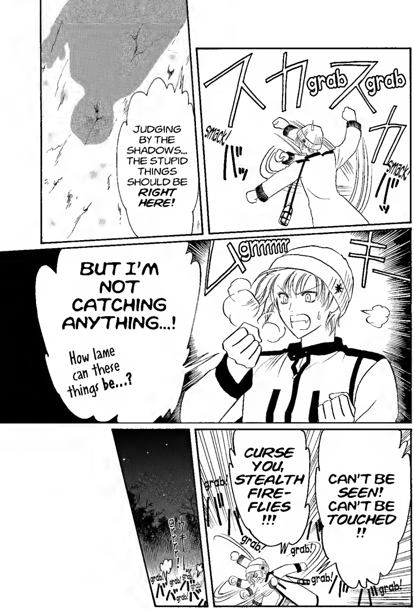

They're still following me...!
Shhoooo
dash
Whoooo

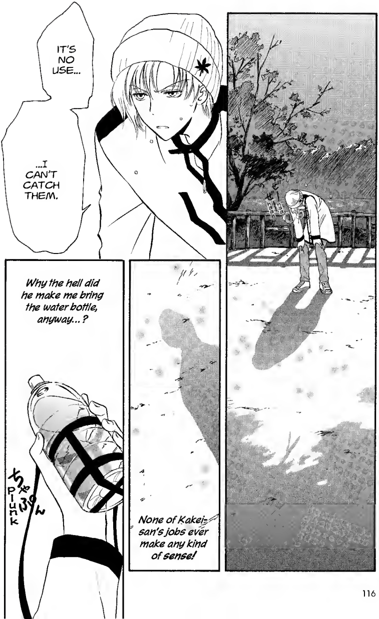

Shadows.
Formless shadows, chasing me.
スゥ
Shoooo
Could it be another spirit...?
How can I tell what I'm up against if I can't even see it...?
No. Wait.
If it were a spirit, it would have no body to cast a shadow.

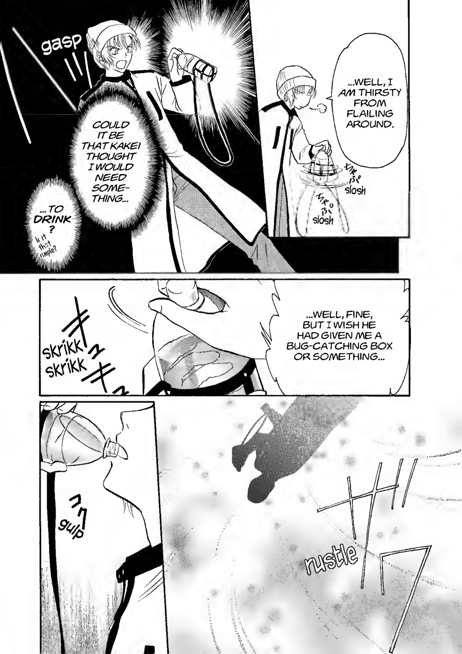

Which means whatever's causing it must actually be here.
But how come I don't see anything...?
tmp tmp tmp tmp
...WELL, I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, AND I DON'T HAVE TIME...
Shoooooooo

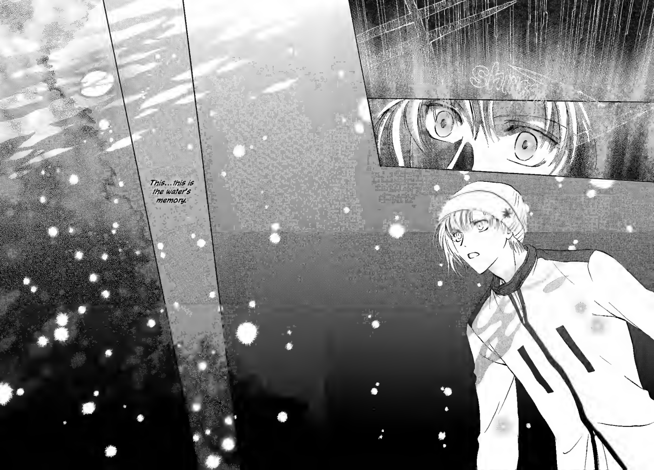

...BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THEM ANYWAY.
Now that I think about it, I saw something like this back home.
There were bugs everywhere out in the country. I'd go into the yard and they'd swarm all over me.
BUGS...

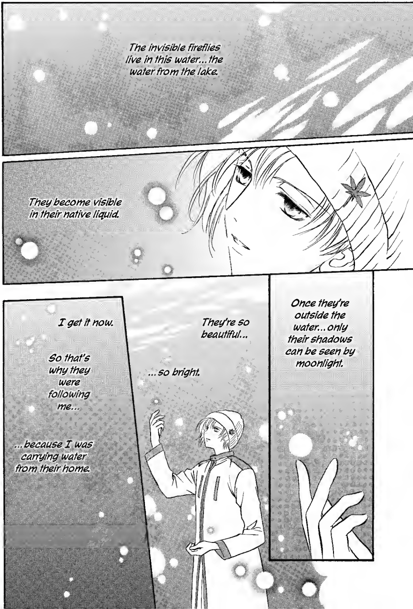

SO...
...THESE ARE THE INVISIBLE FIREFLIES.
slip
grab
HUH?

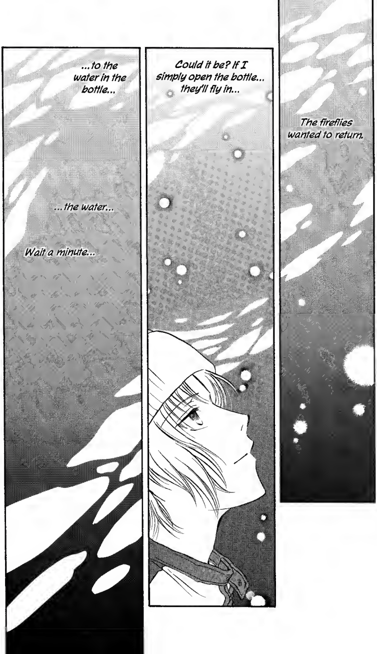

スカ grab
スカ grab
smack! バッ
smack! バッ
JUDGING BY THE SHADOWS... THE STUPID THINGS SHOULD BE *RIGHT HERE!*
ムキー grrrrrrr
BUT I'M NOT CATCHING ANYTHING...!
How lame can these things be...?
CAN'T BE SEEN! CAN'T BE TOUCHED!!
CURSE YOU, STEALTH FIRE-FLIES!!!
grab!
grab!
grab!
grab!
grab!
ウキー! grrr
grab! grab! grab! grab! grab!

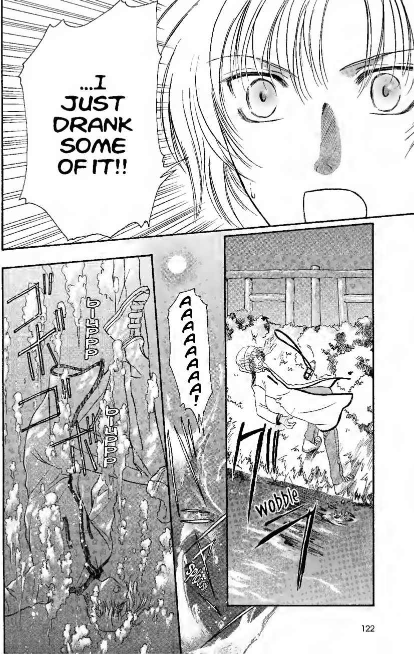

haa
haan
ぜー ぜー
IT'S NO USE...
...I CAN'T CATCH THEM.
None of Kakei-san's jobs ever make any kind of sense!
Why the hell did he make me bring the water bottle, anyway...?
plunk
ちゃぷ

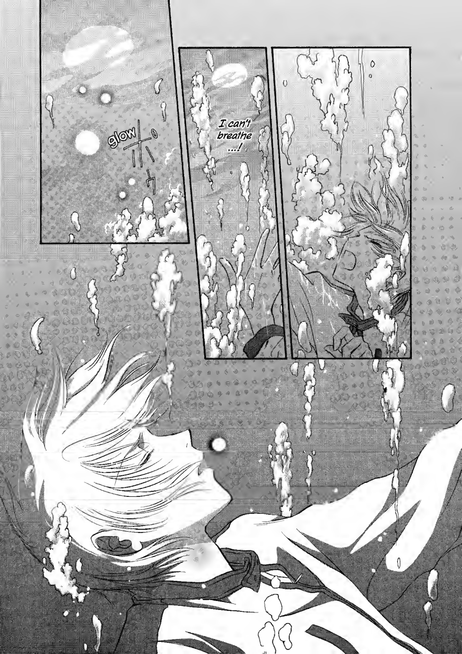

...WELL, I AM THIRSTY FROM FLAILING AROUND.
ちゃぷ
slosh
ちゃぷ
slosh
gasp
COULD IT BE THAT KAKEI THOUGHT I WOULD NEED SOME-THING...
...TO DRINK?
Is it that simple?
...WELL, FINE, BUT I WISH HE HAD GIVEN ME A BUG-CATCHING BOX OR SOMETHING...
skrikk
skrikk
gulp
rustle

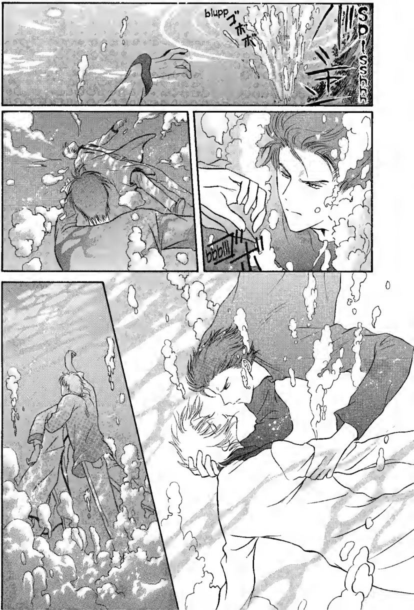

This...this is the water's memory.

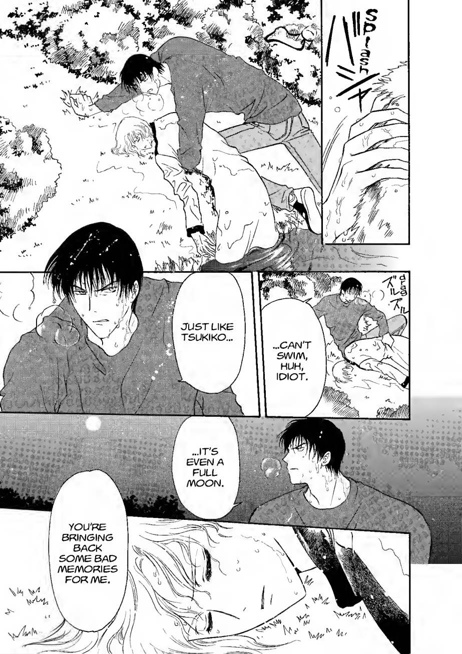

The invisible fireflies live in this water... the water from the lake.
They become visible in their native liquid.
Once they're outside the water... only their shadows can be seen by moonlight.
They're so beautiful...
...so bright.
I get it now.
So that's why they were following me...
...because I was carrying water from their home.

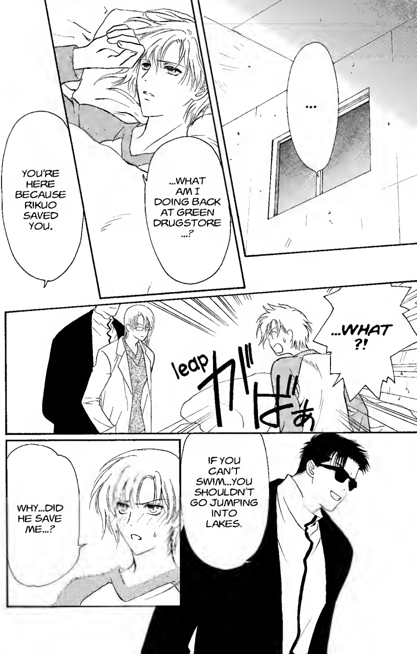

The fireflies wanted to return.
Could it be? If I simply open the bottle... they'll fly in...
...to the water in the bottle...
...the water...
Wait a minute...

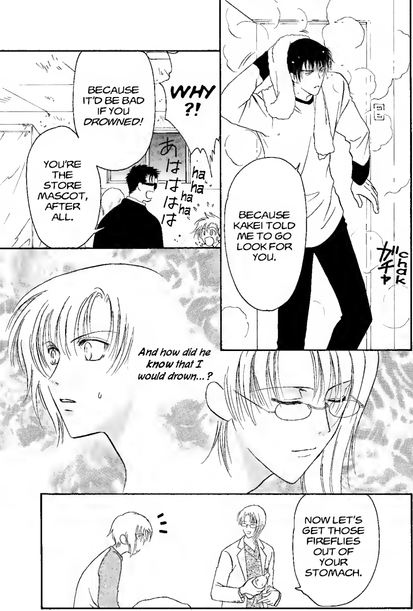

...I JUST DRANK SOME OF IT!!
wobble
AAAAAAAAA!
sploosh
ゴボ
bluppp
ゴボ
bluppp

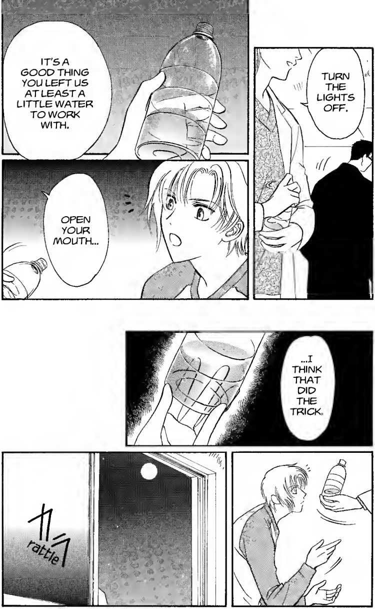

I can't breathe ...!
glow
ポウ

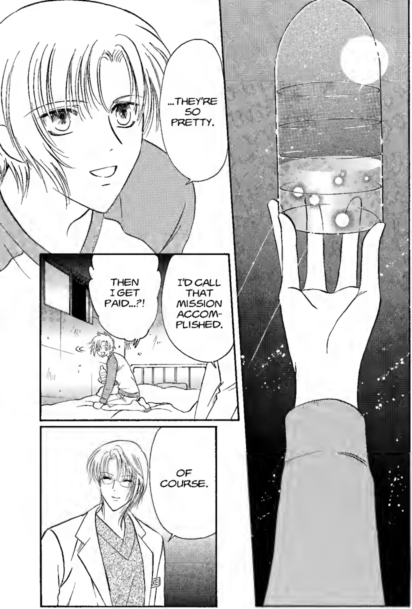

Splisshhh
ボ
blupp
ゴボボ
bbblll

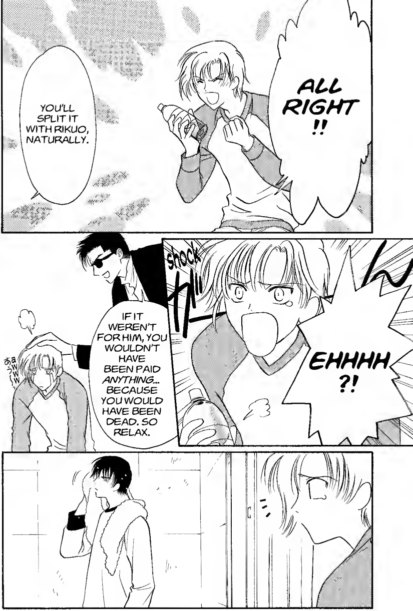

バシャ
splash
ズルズル
drag
...CAN'T SWIM, HUH, IDIOT.
JUST LIKE TSUKIKO...
...IT'S EVEN A FULL MOON.
YOU'RE BRINGING BACK SOME BAD MEMORIES FOR ME.

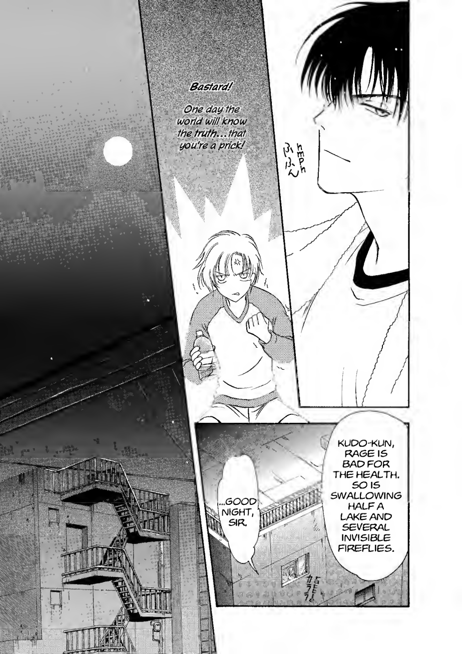

...
...WHAT AM I DOING BACK AT GREEN DRUGSTORE ...?
YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE RIKUO SAVED YOU.
...WHAT ?!
leap
がばぁ
IF YOU CAN'T SWIM...YOU SHOULDN'T GO JUMPING INTO LAKES.
WHY...DID HE SAVE ME...?


ガチャ chak
BECAUSE KAKEI TOLD ME TO GO LOOK FOR YOU.
WHY ?!
BECAUSE IT'D BE BAD IF YOU DROWNED!
あははは ha ha ha ha
YOU'RE THE STORE MASCOT, AFTER ALL.
And how did he know that I would drown...?
NOW LET'S GET THOSE FIREFLIES OUT OF YOUR STOMACH.


TURN THE LIGHTS OFF.
IT'S A GOOD THING YOU LEFT US AT LEAST A LITTLE WATER TO WORK WITH.
OPEN YOUR MOUTH...
...I THINK THAT DID THE TRICK.
rattle


...THEY'RE SO PRETTY.
I'D CALL THAT MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.
THEN I GET PAID...?!
OF COURSE.
KEI

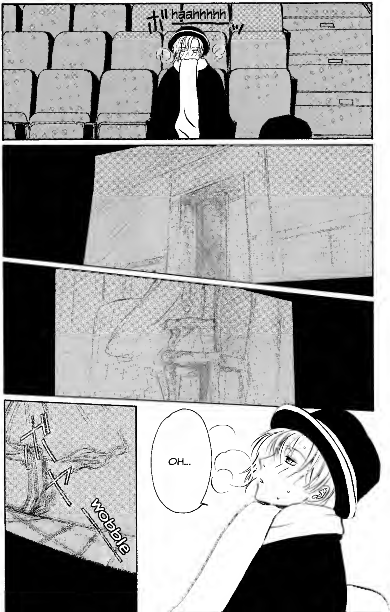

ALL RIGHT!!
YOU'LL SPLIT IT WITH RIKUO, NATURALLY.
EHHHH?!
shock
IF IT WEREN'T FOR HIM, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN PAID *ANYTHING*... BECAUSE YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD. SO RELAX.
aWWW
あう～

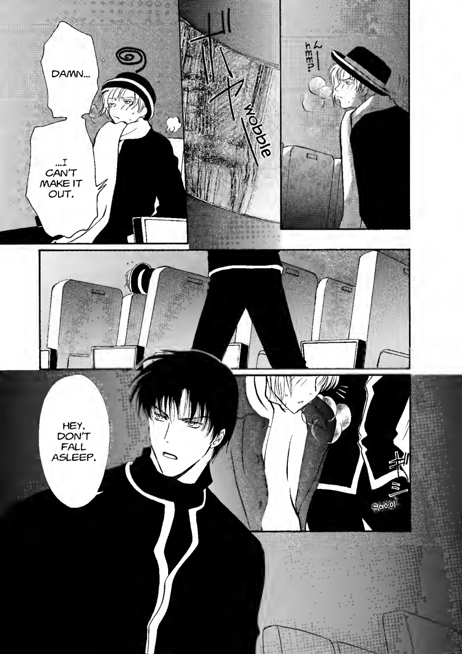

ふふん
hmph
Bastard!
One day the world will know the truth...that you're a prick!
KUDO-KUN, RAGE IS BAD FOR THE HEALTH. SO IS SWALLOWING HALF A LAKE AND SEVERAL INVISIBLE FIREFLIES.
...GOOD NIGHT, SIR.
カラカラ
rattle

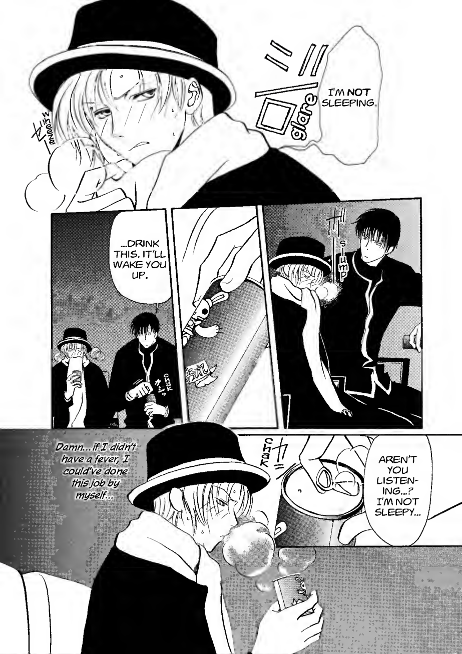
LEGAL DRUG

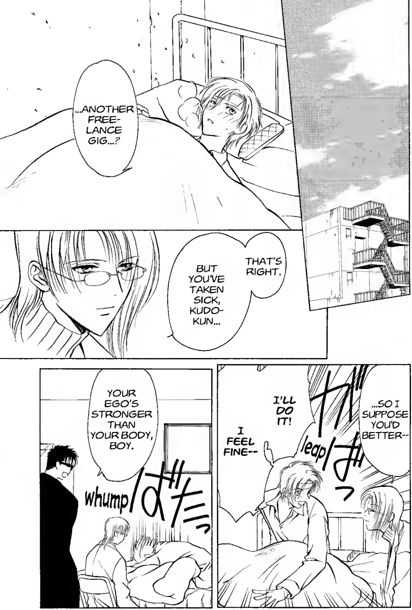
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

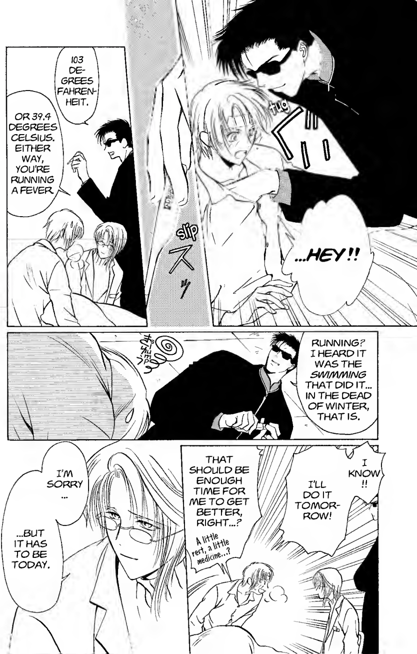
DRUG NO.05

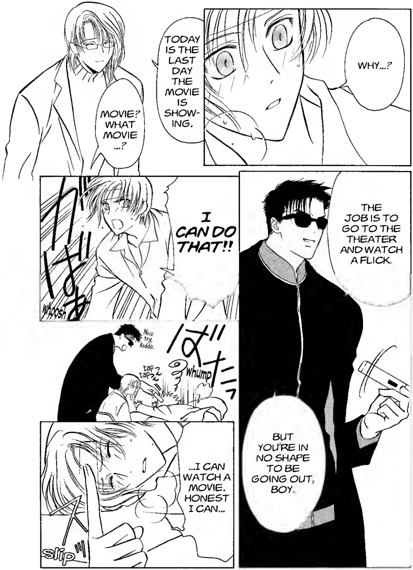

ボ
haahhhhh
ッ
OH...
ガス
wobble

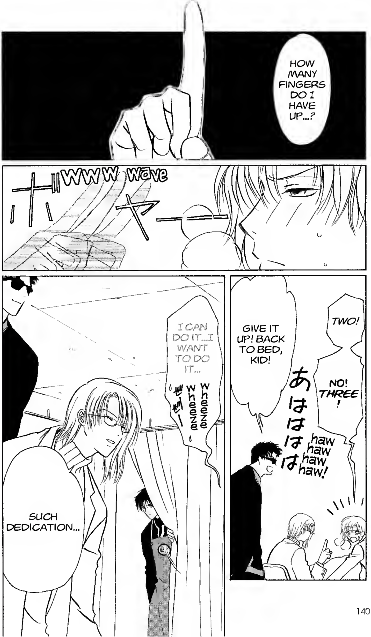

んー
hmm?
wobble
DAMN...
...I CAN'T MAKE IT OUT.
HEY. DON'T FALL ASLEEP.
scoot

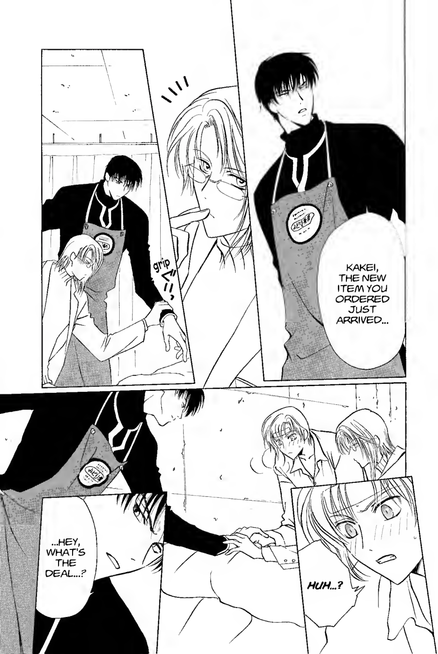

ジロ
glare
I'M NOT SLEEPING.
ゼー
wheeze
ガ
slump
あれ
...DRINK THIS. IT'LL WAKE YOU UP.
カシュ
chak
AREN'T YOU LISTENING...? I'M NOT SLEEPY...
カ
chak
Damn... if I didn't have a fever, I could've done this job by myself...

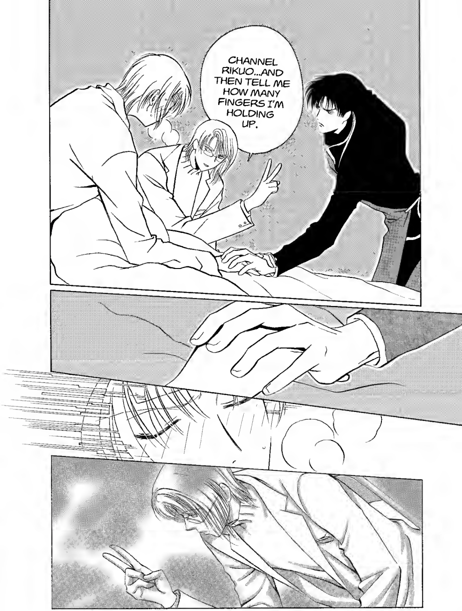

...ANOTHER FREE-LANCE GIG...?
THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT YOU'VE TAKEN SICK, KUDO-KUN...
...SO I SUPPOSE YOU'D BETTER--
leap/がばっ
I'LL DO IT!
I FEEL FINE--
YOUR EGO'S STRONGER THAN YOUR BODY, BOY.
whump/ばたっ

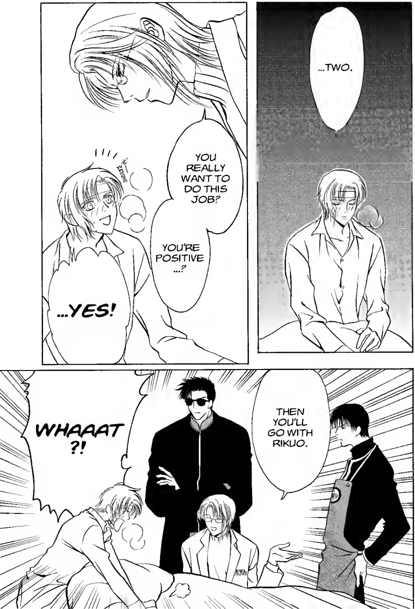

tug
...HEY!!
slip
103 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.
OR 39.4 DEGREES CELSIUS. EITHER WAY, YOU'RE RUNNING A FEVER.
RUNNING? I HEARD IT WAS THE *SWIMMING* THAT DID IT... IN THE DEAD OF WINTER, THAT IS.
slump
I KNOW!!
I'LL DO IT TOMORROW!
THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO GET BETTER, RIGHT...?
A little rest, a little medicine...?
I'M SORRY...
...BUT IT HAS TO BE TODAY.

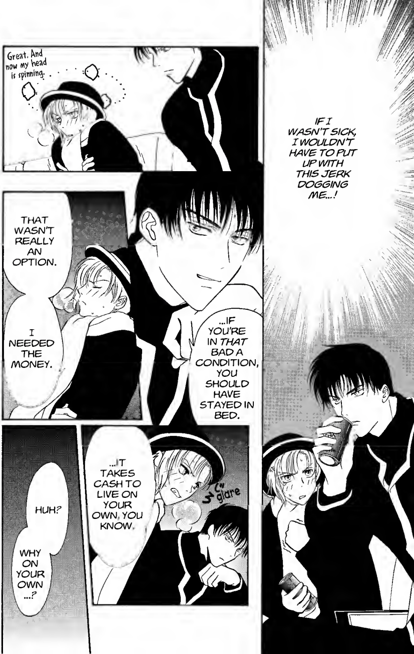

WHY...?
TODAY IS THE LAST DAY THE MOVIE IS SHOWING.
MOVIE? WHAT MOVIE ...?
THE JOB IS TO GO TO THE THEATER AND WATCH A FLICK.
I CAN DO THAT!!
whoosh
Nice try, kiddo.
tap tap
whump
BUT YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO BE GOING OUT, BOY.
...I CAN WATCH A MOVIE. HONEST I CAN...
slip

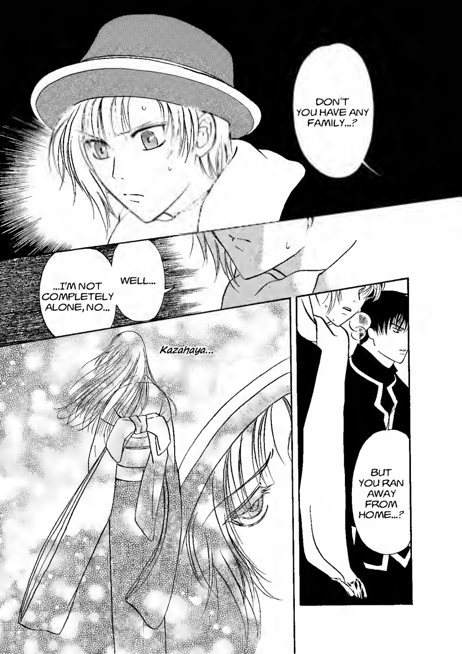

HOW MANY FINGERS DO I HAVE UP...?
ホヤー
WWW wave
TWO!
GIVE IT UP! BACK TO BED, KID!
NO! THREE!
あははははは
haw haw haw haw!
I CAN DO IT...I WANT TO DO IT...
ぜーぜー
wheeze wheeze
SUCH DEDICATION...

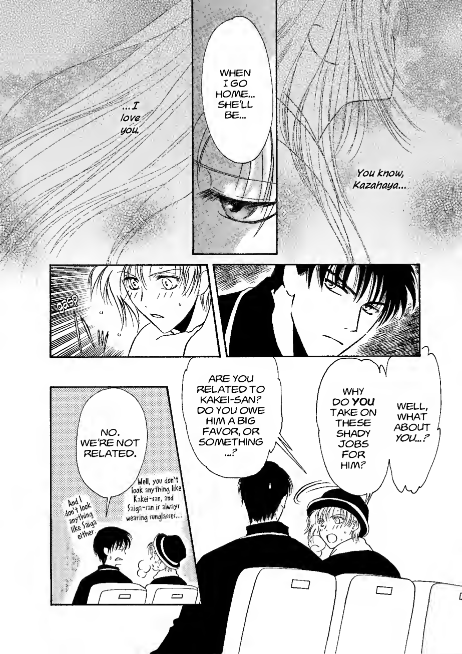

KAKEI, THE NEW ITEM YOU ORDERED JUST ARRIVED...
grip
HUH...?
...HEY, WHAT'S THE DEAL...?

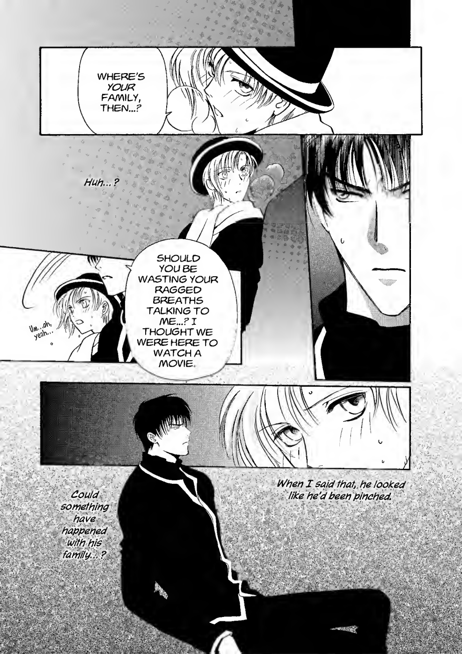

CHANNEL RIKUO...AND THEN TELL ME HOW MANY FINGERS I'M HOLDING UP.

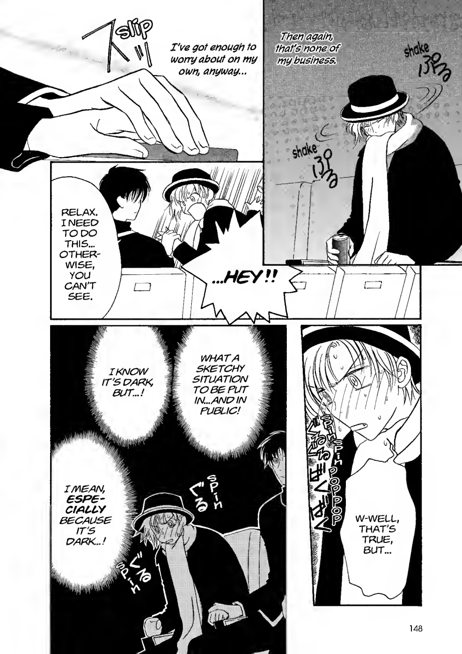

...TWO.
YOU REALLY WANT TO DO THIS JOB?
YOU'RE POSITIVE ...?
...YES!
THEN YOU'LL GO WITH RIKUO.
WHAAAT ?!

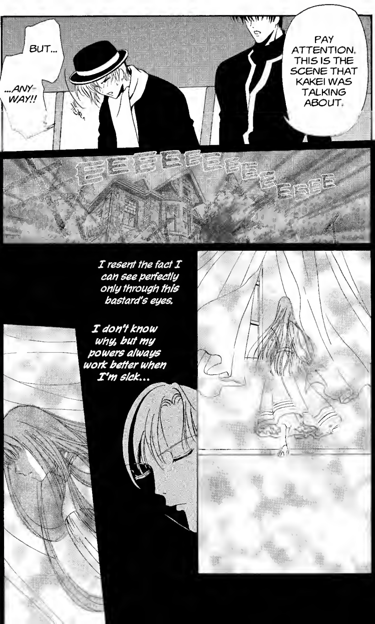

IF I WASN'T SICK, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH THIS JERK DOGGING ME...!
Great. And now my head is spinning.
...IF YOU'RE IN *THAT* BAD A CONDITION, YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN BED.
THAT WASN'T REALLY AN OPTION.
I NEEDED THE MONEY.
...IT TAKES CASH TO LIVE ON YOUR OWN, YOU KNOW.
glare
HUH?
WHY ON YOUR OWN ...?

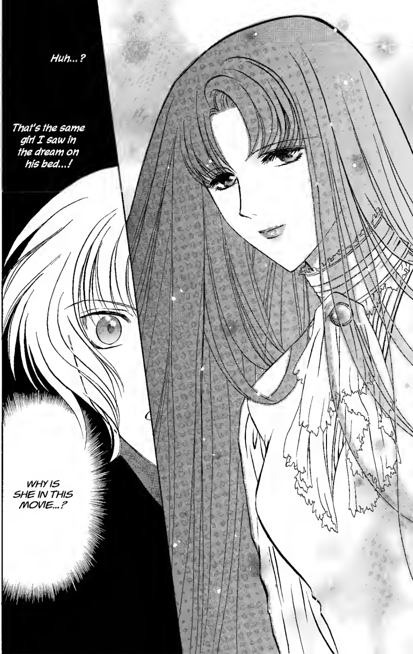

DON'T YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY...?
WELL...
...I'M NOT COMPLETELY ALONE, NO...
Kazahaya...
BUT YOU RAN AWAY FROM HOME...?

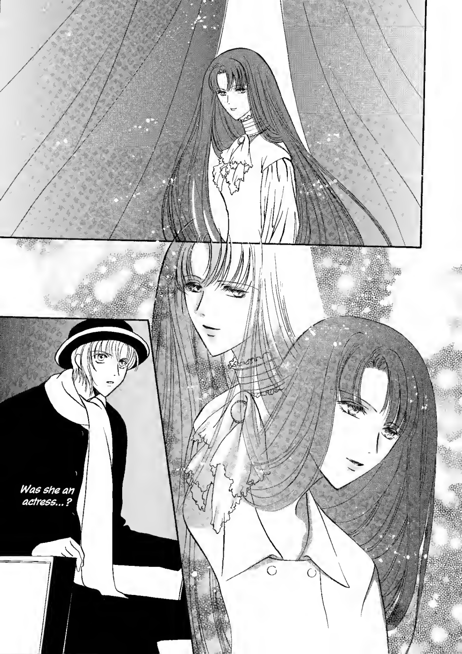

You know, Kazahaya...
WHEN I GO HOME... SHE'LL BE...
...I love you.
gasp
WELL, WHAT ABOUT YOU...?
WHY DO YOU TAKE ON THESE SHADY JOBS FOR HIM?
ARE YOU RELATED TO KAKEI-SAN? DO YOU OWE HIM A BIG FAVOR, OR SOMETHING ...?
NO. WE'RE NOT RELATED.
Well, you don't look anything like Kakei-san, and Saiga-san is always wearing sunglasses...
And I don't look anything like Saiga either.

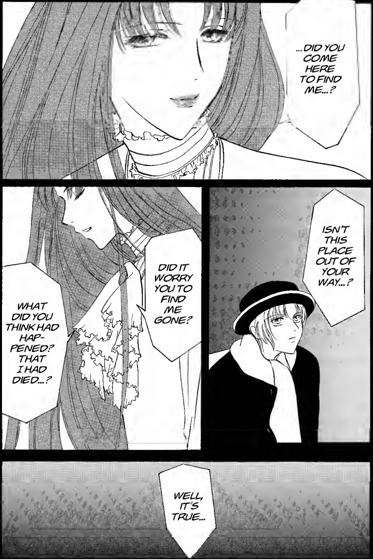

WHERE'S *YOUR* FAMILY, THEN...?
Huh...?
SHOULD YOU BE WASTING YOUR RAGGED BREATHS TALKING TO ME...? I THOUGHT WE WERE HERE TO WATCH A MOVIE.
Um...oh, yeah...
When I said that, he looked like he'd been pinched.
Could something have happened with his family...?

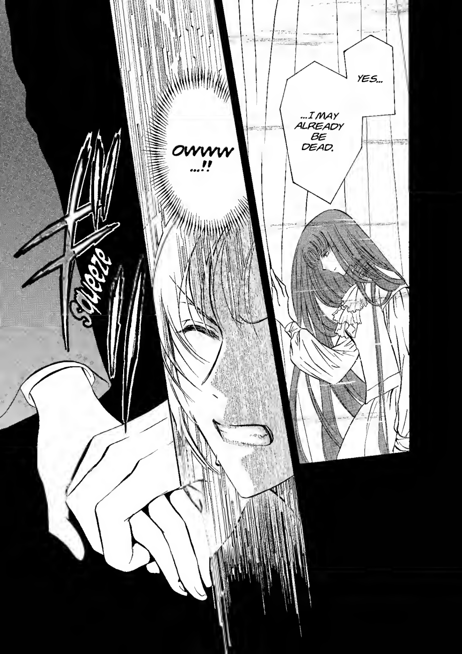

Then again, that's none of my business.
shake ぷる
shake ぷる
slip スッ
I've got enough to worry about on my own, anyway...
...HEY!!
RELAX. I NEED TO DO THIS... OTHERWISE, YOU CAN'T SEE.
W-WELL, THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
spin spin ぐるぐる
pop pop pop ぼくぼく
WHAT A SKETCHY SITUATION TO BE PUT IN...AND IN PUBLIC!
I KNOW IT'S DARK, BUT...!
spin ぐる
I MEAN, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE IT'S DARK...!
spin ぐる

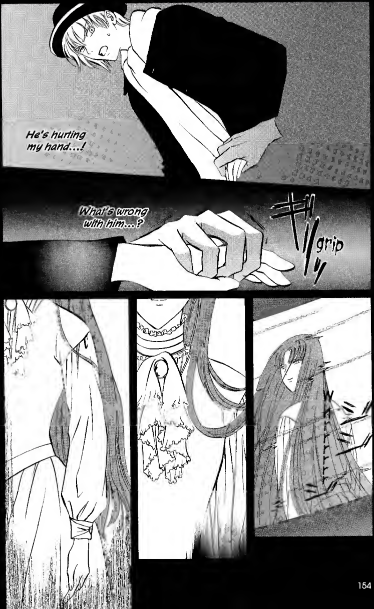

PAY ATTENTION. THIS IS THE SCENE THAT KAKEI WAS TALKING ABOUT.
BUT...
...ANYWAY!!
EEEEEEEEEEEEE
I resent the fact I can see perfectly only through this bastard's eyes.
I don't know why, but my powers always work better when I'm sick...

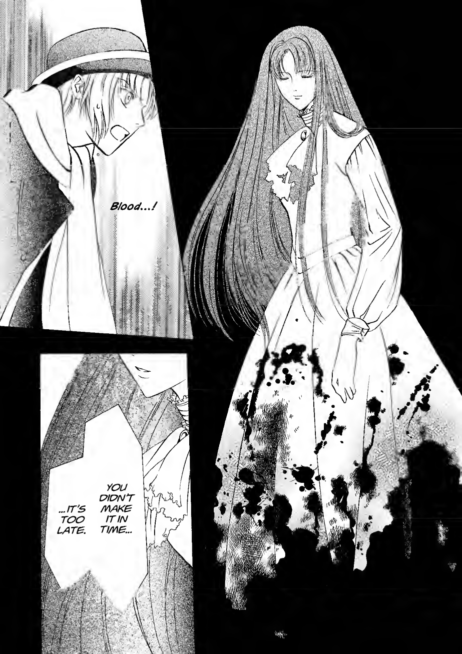

Huh...?
That's the same girl I saw in the dream on his bed...!
WHY IS SHE IN THIS MOVIE...?

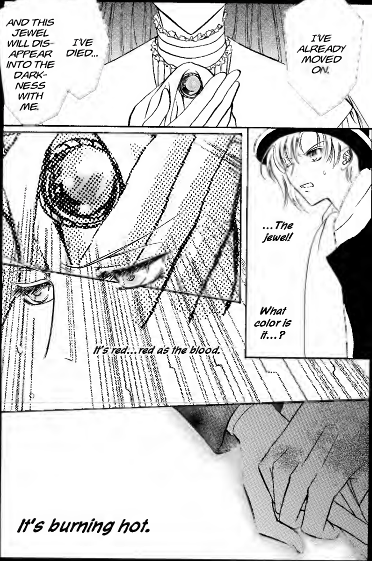

Was she an actress...?

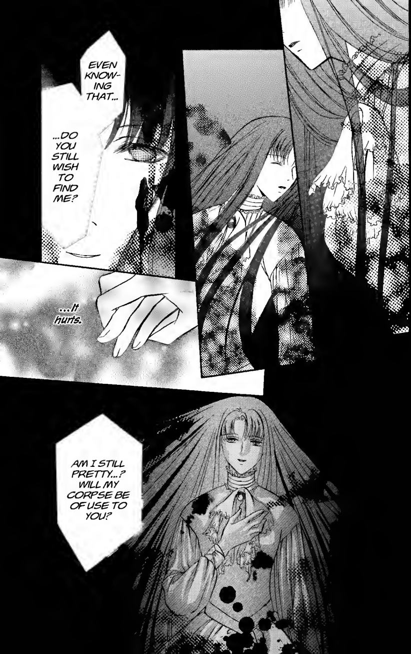

...DID YOU COME HERE TO FIND ME...?
ISN'T THIS PLACE OUT OF YOUR WAY...?
DID IT WORRY YOU TO FIND ME GONE?
WHAT DID YOU THINK HAD HAPPENED? THAT I HAD DIED...?
WELL, IT'S TRUE...

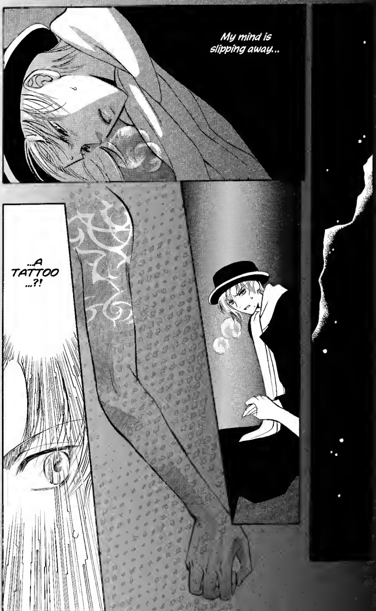

YES...
...I MAY ALREADY BE DEAD.
OWWW ...!!
Squeeze

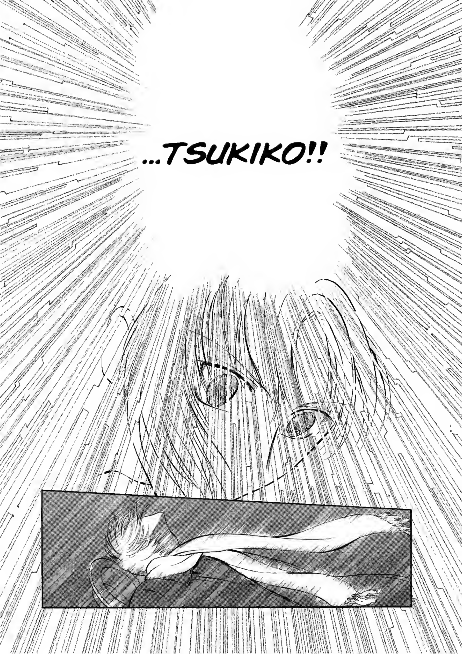

He's hurting my hand...!
What's wrong with him...?
grip

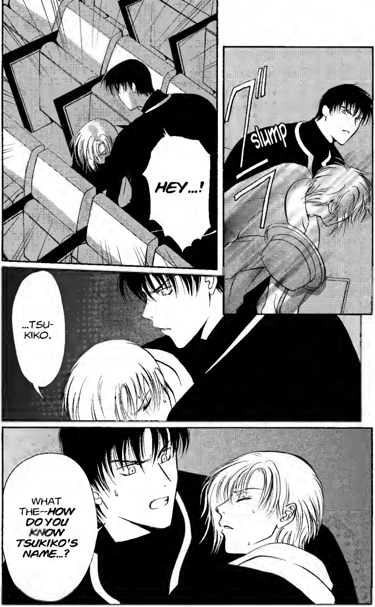

Blood...!
YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT IN TIME...
...IT'S TOO LATE.

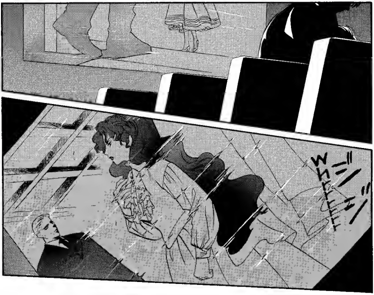

I'VE ALREADY MOVED ON.
I'VE DIED...
AND THIS JEWEL WILL DISAPPEAR INTO THE DARKNESS WITH ME.
...The jewel!
What color is it...?
It's red...red as the blood.
It's burning hot.

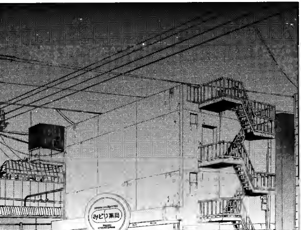

EVEN KNOWING THAT...
...DO YOU STILL WISH TO FIND ME?
...It hurts.
AM I STILL PRETTY...? WILL MY CORPSE BE OF USE TO YOU?

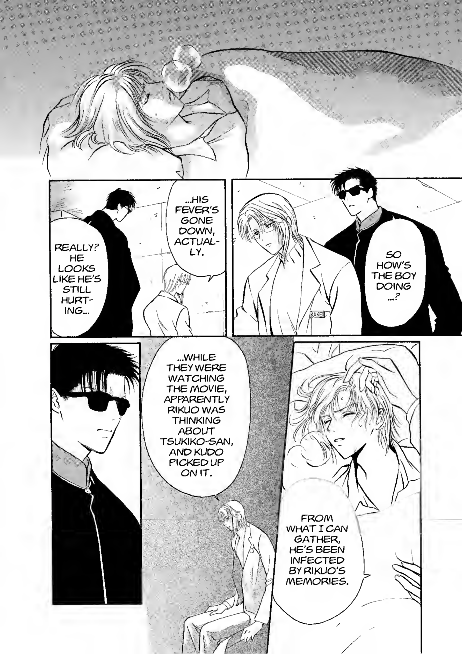

My mind is slipping away...
...A TATTOO ...?!

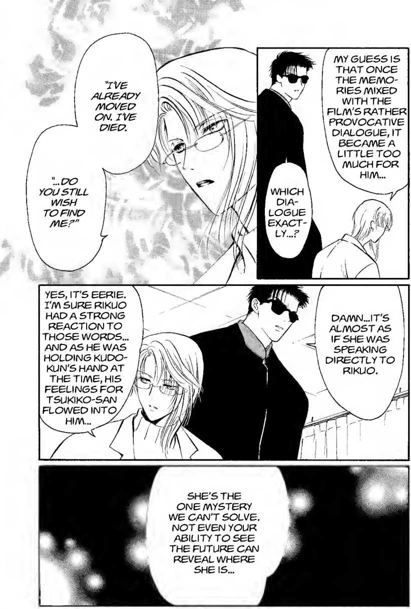

...TSUKIKO!!

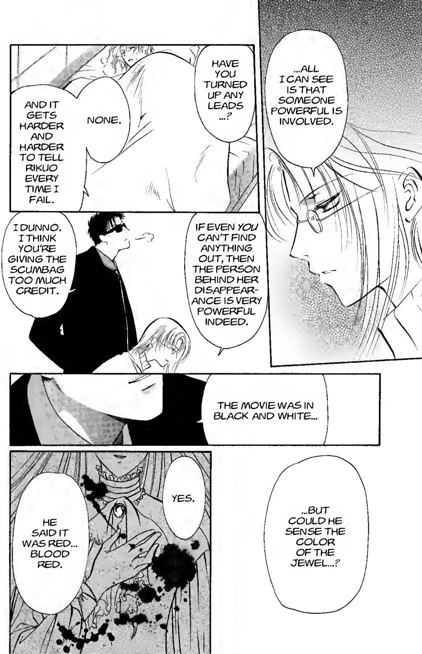

HEY...!
slump
...TSU-KIKO.
WHAT THE--HOW DO YOU KNOW TSUKIKO'S NAME...?

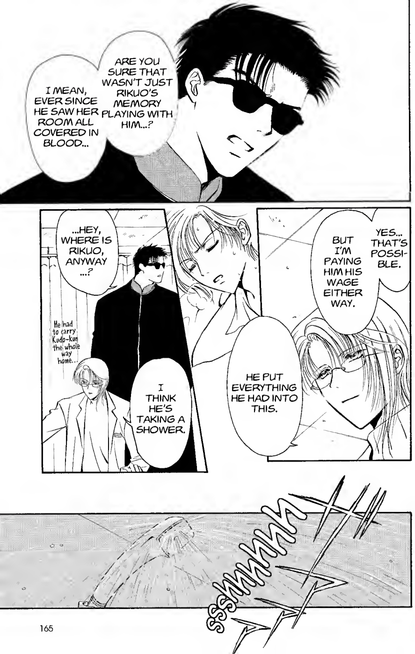

Wheeeee
ズズーン

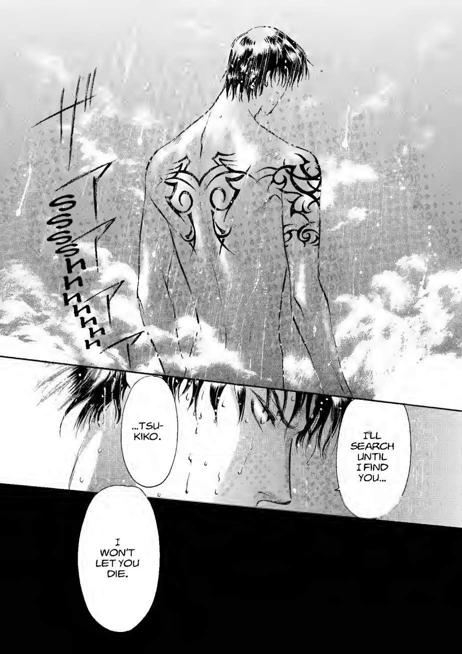

みどり薬局


SO HOW'S THE BOY DOING ...?
KAKE
...HIS FEVER'S GONE DOWN, ACTUALLY.
REALLY? HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S STILL HURTING...
FROM WHAT I CAN GATHER, HE'S BEEN INFECTED BY RIKUO'S MEMORIES.
...WHILE THEY WERE WATCHING THE MOVIE, APPARENTLY RIKUO WAS THINKING ABOUT TSUKIKO-SAN, AND KUDO PICKED UP ON IT.


MY GUESS IS THAT ONCE THE MEMORIES MIXED WITH THE FILM'S RATHER PROVOCATIVE DIALOGUE, IT BECAME A LITTLE TOO MUCH FOR HIM...
WHICH DIALOGUE EXACTLY...?
"I'VE ALREADY MOVED ON. I'VE DIED.
"...DO YOU STILL WISH TO FIND ME?"
DAMN...IT'S ALMOST AS IF SHE WAS SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO RIKUO.
YES, IT'S EERIE. I'M SURE RIKUO HAD A STRONG REACTION TO THOSE WORDS... AND AS HE WAS HOLDING KUDO-KUN'S HAND AT THE TIME, HIS FEELINGS FOR TSUKIKO-SAN FLOWED INTO HIM...
SHE'S THE ONE MYSTERY WE CAN'T SOLVE. NOT EVEN YOUR ABILITY TO SEE THE FUTURE CAN REVEAL WHERE SHE IS...


...ALL I CAN SEE IS THAT SOMEONE POWERFUL IS INVOLVED.
HAVE YOU TURNED UP ANY LEADS ...?
NONE.
AND IT GETS HARDER AND HARDER TO TELL RIKUO EVERY TIME I FAIL.
IF EVEN *YOU* CAN'T FIND ANYTHING OUT, THEN THE PERSON BEHIND HER DISAPPEARANCE IS VERY POWERFUL INDEED.
I DUNNO. I THINK YOU'RE GIVING THE SCUMBAG TOO MUCH CREDIT.
THE MOVIE WAS IN BLACK AND WHITE...
...BUT COULD HE SENSE THE COLOR OF THE JEWEL...?
YES.
HE SAID IT WAS RED... BLOOD RED.

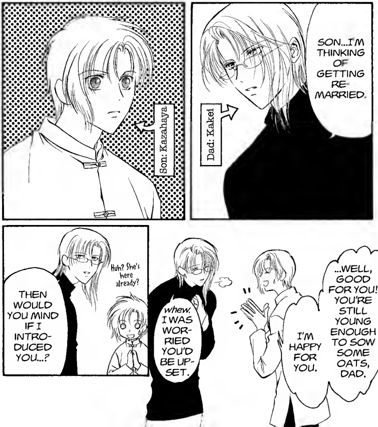

ARE YOU SURE THAT WASN'T JUST RIKUO'S MEMORY PLAYING WITH HIM...?
I MEAN, EVER SINCE HE SAW HER ROOM ALL COVERED IN BLOOD...
YES... THAT'S POSSIBLE.
BUT I'M PAYING HIM HIS WAGE EITHER WAY.
HE PUT EVERYTHING HE HAD INTO THIS.
...HEY, WHERE IS RIKUO, ANYWAY...?
I THINK HE'S TAKING A SHOWER.
He had to carry Kudo-kun the whole way home...
SSSHHHHHH

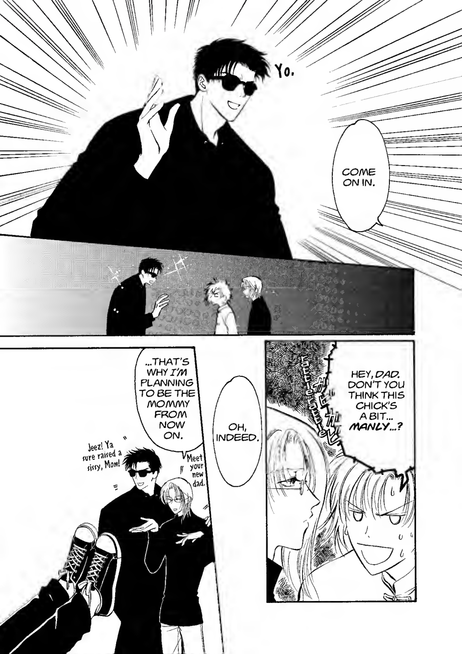

SSSShhhhhh
ザァァァ
...TSU-KIKO.
I'LL SEARCH UNTIL I FIND YOU...
I WON'T LET YOU DIE.

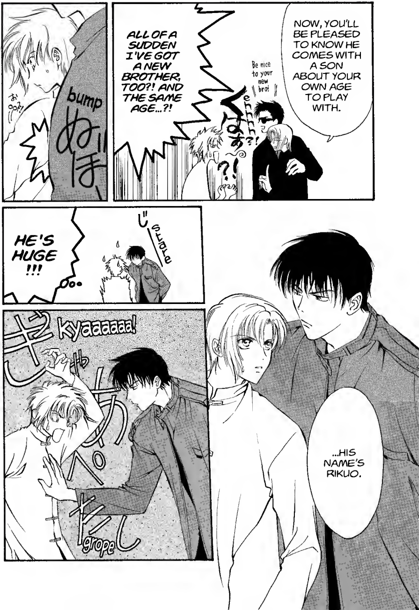
LEGAL DRUG

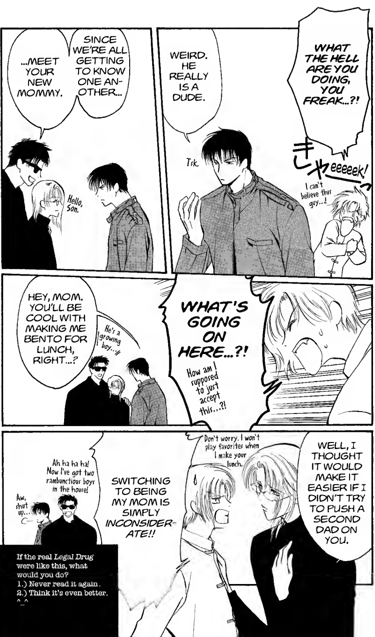
ILLEGAL DRUG

It's a hallucination.


SON...I'M THINKING OF GETTING RE-MARRIED.
Dad: Kakei
Son: Kazahaya
...WELL, GOOD FOR YOU! YOU'RE STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO SOW SOME OATS, DAD.
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.
whew. I WAS WORRIED YOU'D BE UPSET.
THEN WOULD YOU MIND IF I INTRODUCED YOU...?
Huh? She's here already?


Yo.
COME ON IN.
rattle rattle
ガビガビ
HEY, *DAD*. DON'T YOU THINK THIS CHICK'S A BIT... ***MANLY...?***
OH, INDEED.
...THAT'S WHY *I'M* PLANNING TO BE THE MOMMY FROM NOW ON.
Meet your new dad.
Jeez! Ya sure raised a sissy, Mom!


NOW, YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO KNOW HE COMES WITH A SON ABOUT YOUR OWN AGE TO PLAY WITH.
Be nice to your new bro!
ehhhh?!
ALL OF A SUDDEN I'VE GOT A NEW BROTHER, TOO?! AND THE SAME AGE...?!
bump ぬぼ
お oof!
じ stare
HE'S HUGE !!!
...HIS NAME'S RIKUO.
kyaaaaaa!
grope


WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, YOU FREAK...?!
きゃ eeeeek!
I can't believe this guy...!
WEIRD. HE REALLY IS A DUDE.
Tsk.
SINCE WE'RE ALL GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER...
...MEET YOUR NEW MOMMY.
Hello, Son.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...?!
How am I supposed to just accept this...?!
HEY, MOM. YOU'LL BE COOL WITH MAKING ME BENTO FOR LUNCH, RIGHT...?
He's a growing boy...
WELL, I THOUGHT IT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER IF I DIDN'T TRY TO PUSH A SECOND DAD ON YOU.
Don't worry. I won't play favorites when I make your lunch.
SWITCHING TO BEING MY MOM IS SIMPLY INCONSIDERATE!!
Ah ha ha ha! Now I've got two rambunctious boys in the house!
Aw, shut up...

If the real *Legal Drug* were like this, what would you do?
1.) Never read it again.
2.) Think it's even better.
^_^

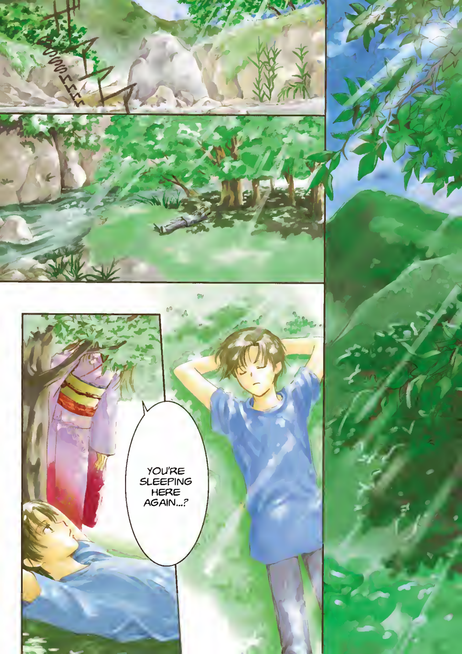
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
TOKYO
TAZAWA

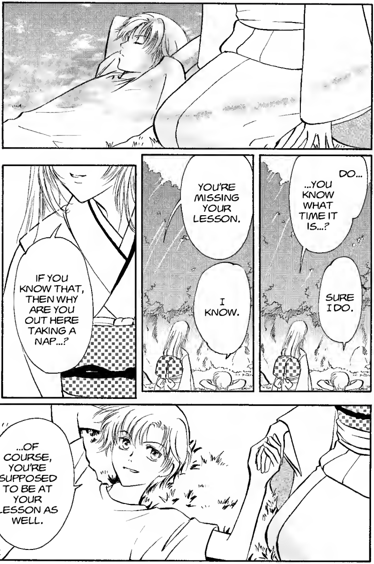
LEGAL DRUG

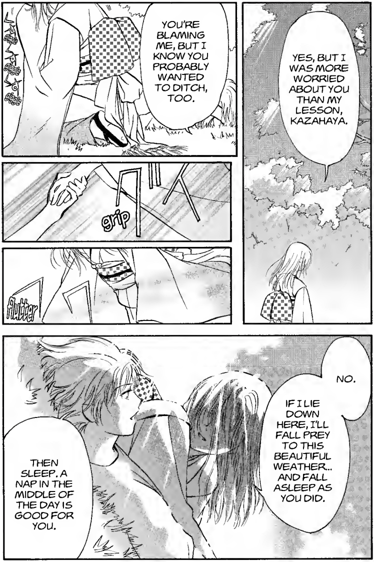
DRUG NO.06

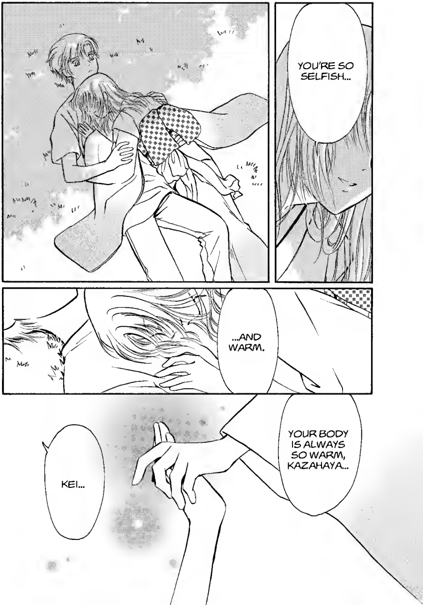
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

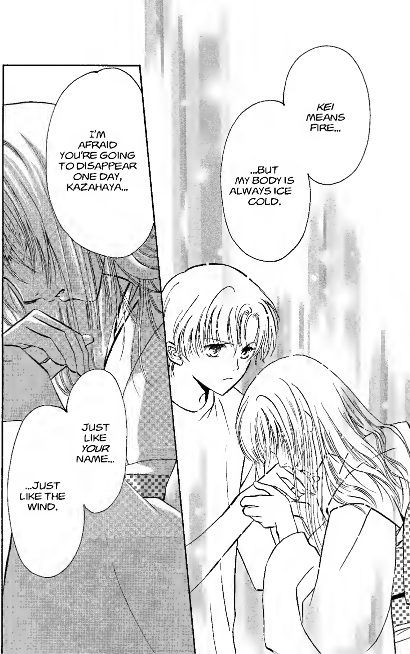
LEGAL DRUG

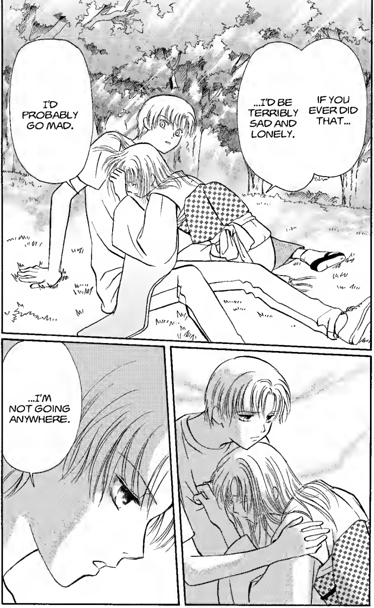

SSShhhh
YOU'RE SLEEPING HERE AGAIN...?

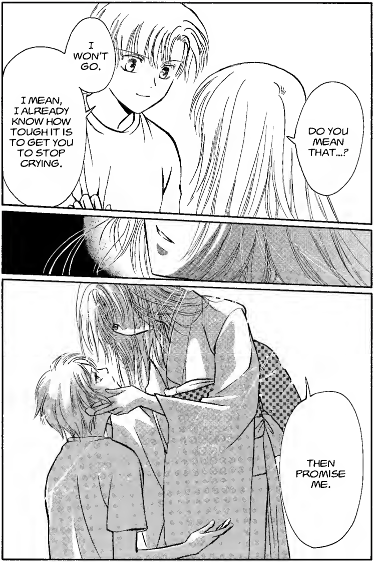

DO... ...YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS...?
SURE I DO.
YOU'RE MISSING YOUR LESSON.
I KNOW.
IF YOU KNOW THAT, THEN WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE TAKING A NAP...?
...OF COURSE, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AT YOUR LESSON AS WELL.

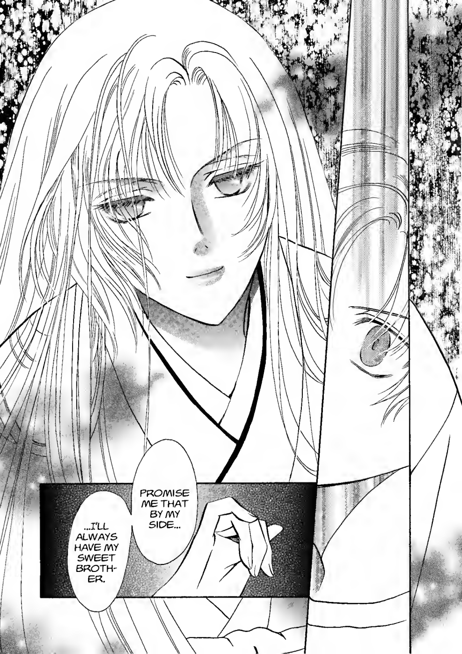

YES, BUT I WAS MORE WORRIED ABOUT YOU THAN MY LESSON, KAZAHAYA.
YOU'RE BLAMING ME, BUT I KNOW YOU PROBABLY WANTED TO DITCH, TOO.
giggle giggle giggle
grip
flutter
NO.
IF I LIE DOWN HERE, I'LL FALL PREY TO THIS BEAUTIFUL WEATHER... AND FALL ASLEEP AS YOU DID.
THEN SLEEP. A NAP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY IS GOOD FOR YOU.

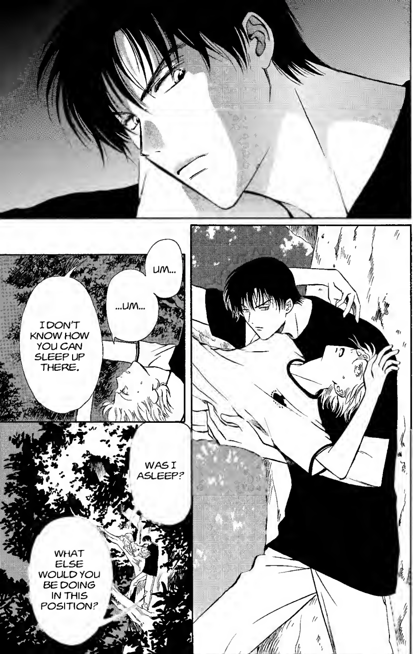

YOU'RE SO SELFISH...
...AND WARM.
YOUR BODY IS ALWAYS SO WARM, KAZAHAYA...
KEI...

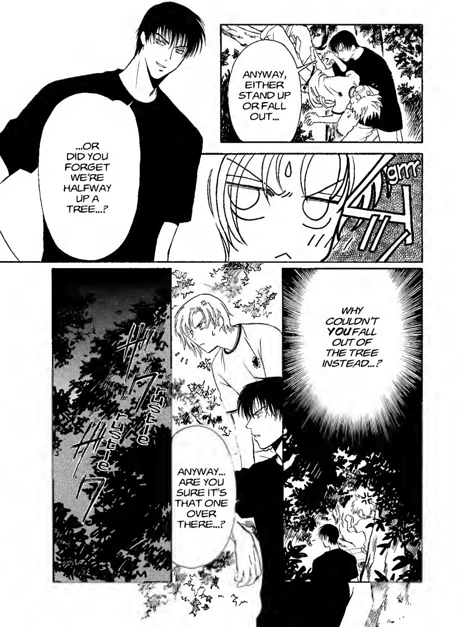

KEI MEANS FIRE...
...BUT MY BODY IS ALWAYS ICE COLD.
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE GOING TO DISAPPEAR ONE DAY, KAZAHAYA...
JUST LIKE *YOUR* NAME...
...JUST LIKE THE WIND.

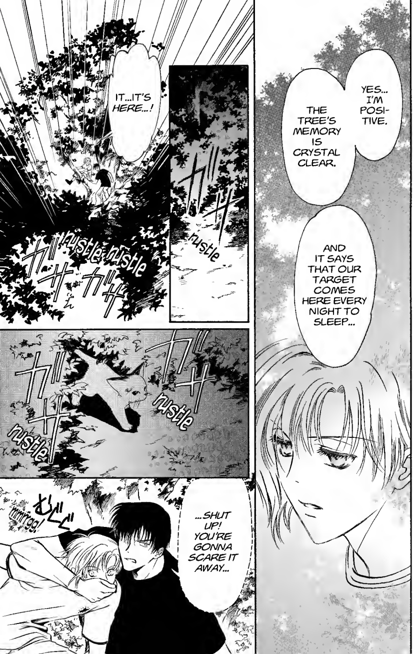

IF YOU EVER DID THAT...
...I'D BE TERRIBLY SAD AND LONELY.
I'D PROBABLY GO MAD.
...I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

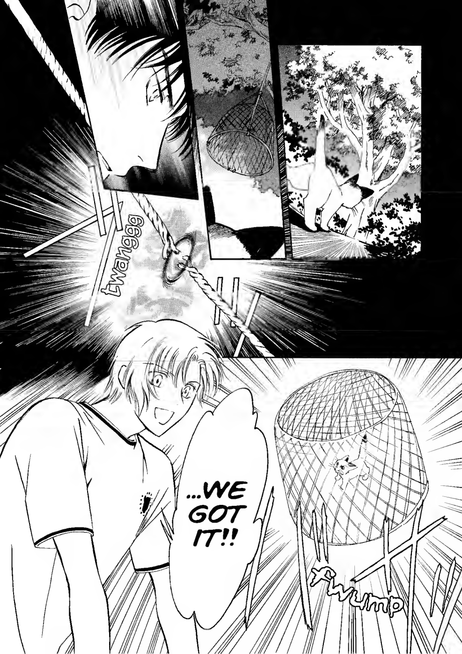

DO YOU MEAN THAT...?
I WON'T GO.
I MEAN, I ALREADY KNOW HOW TOUGH IT IS TO GET YOU TO STOP CRYING.
THEN PROMISE ME.

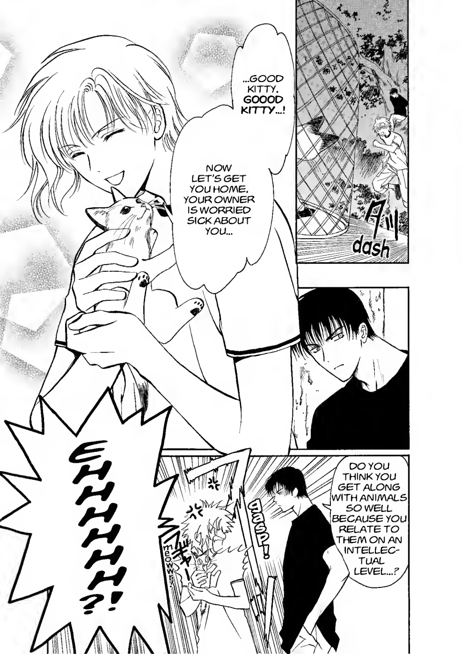

PROMISE ME THAT BY MY SIDE...
...I'LL ALWAYS HAVE MY SWEET BROTHER.

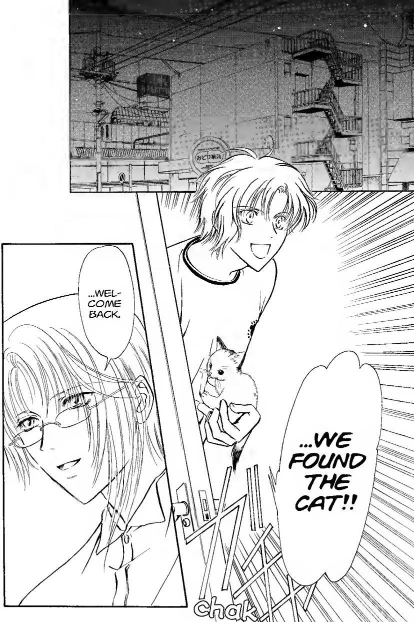

UM...
...UM...
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN SLEEP UP THERE.
WAS I ASLEEP?
WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU BE DOING IN THIS POSITION?

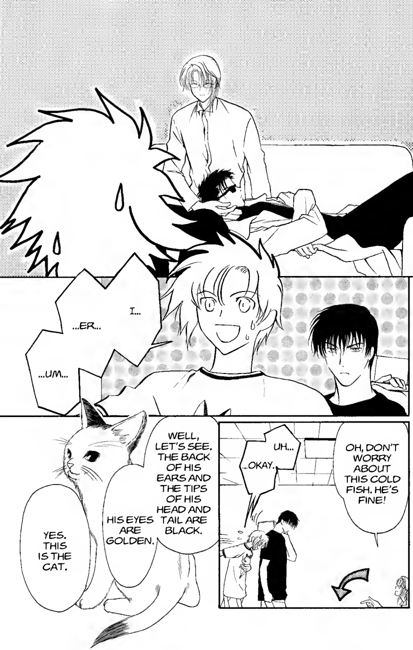

ANYWAY, EITHER STAND UP OR FALL OUT...
...OR DID YOU FORGET WE'RE HALFWAY UP A TREE...?
gmr
WHY COULDN'T *YOU* FALL OUT OF THE TREE INSTEAD...?
ANYWAY... ARE YOU SURE IT'S THAT ONE OVER THERE...?
rustle rustle

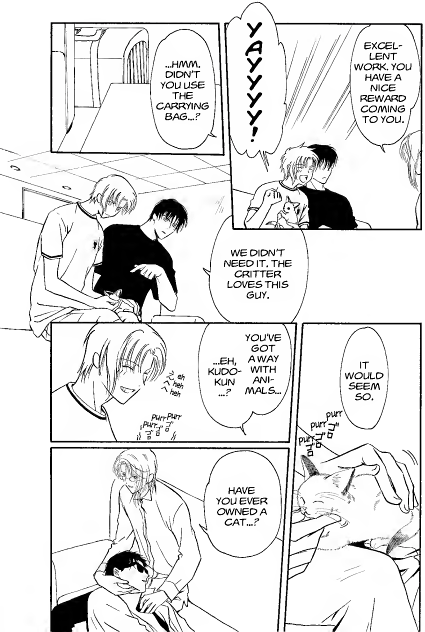

YES... I'M POSITIVE.
THE TREE'S MEMORY IS CRYSTAL CLEAR.
AND IT SAYS THAT OUR TARGET COMES HERE EVERY NIGHT TO SLEEP...
IT...IT'S HERE...!
rustle rustle
rustle
rustle
rustle
...SHUT UP! YOU'RE GONNA SCARE IT AWAY...
mmrrgg!

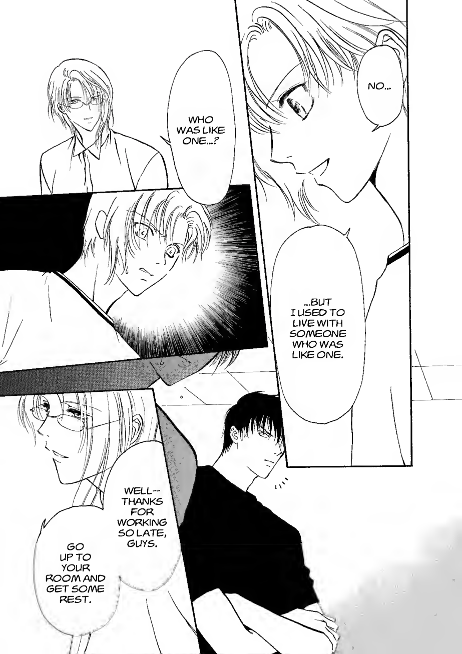

twanggg
...WE GOT IT!!
fwump

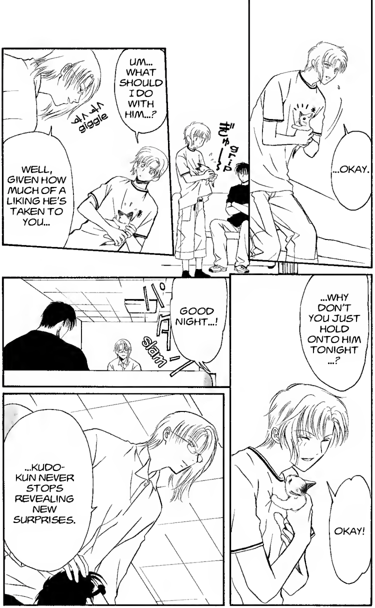

ダッ
dash
...GOOD KITTY. GOOOD KITTY...!
NOW LET'S GET YOU HOME. YOUR OWNER IS WORRIED SICK ABOUT YOU...
DO YOU THINK YOU GET ALONG WITH ANIMALS SO WELL BECAUSE YOU RELATE TO THEM ON AN INTELLECTUAL LEVEL...?
GASP!
ギャー
meowwr!
EHHHHHH?!

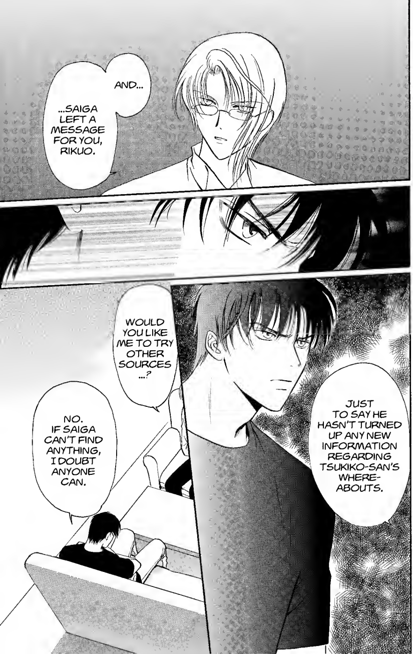

みどり薬局
...WE FOUND THE CAT!!
chak
...WEL-COME BACK.

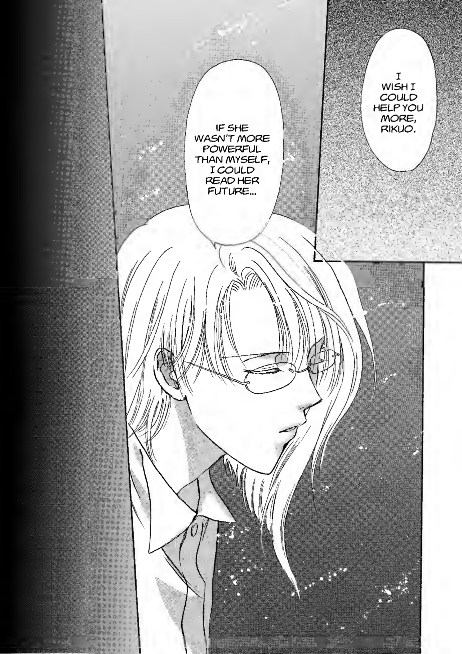

I...
...ER...
...UM...
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS COLD FISH. HE'S FINE!
UH...
...OKAY.
WELL, LET'S SEE. THE BACK OF HIS EARS AND THE TIPS OF HIS HEAD AND TAIL ARE BLACK.
HIS EYES ARE GOLDEN.
YES. THIS IS THE CAT.

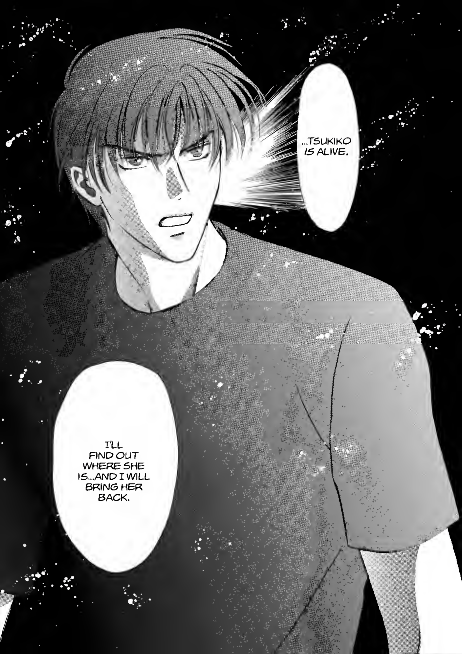

EXCELLENT WORK. YOU HAVE A NICE REWARD COMING TO YOU.
YAYYYYY!
...HMM. DIDN'T YOU USE THE CARRYING BAG...?
WE DIDN'T NEED IT. THE CRITTER LOVES THIS GUY.
...EH, KUDO-KUN...?
YOU'VE GOT A WAY WITH ANIMALS...
eh heh heh
purr purr
IT WOULD SEEM SO.
purr purr
HAVE YOU EVER OWNED A CAT...?

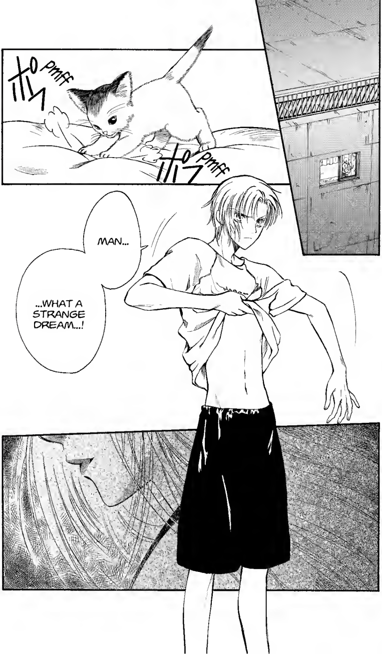

NO...
...BUT I USED TO LIVE WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS LIKE ONE.
WHO WAS LIKE ONE...?
WELL-- THANKS FOR WORKING SO LATE, GUYS.
GO UP TO YOUR ROOM AND GET SOME REST.


UM... WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH HIM...?
giggle
WELL, GIVEN HOW MUCH OF A LIKING HE'S TAKEN TO YOU...
grip
...WHY DON'T YOU JUST HOLD ONTO HIM TONIGHT ...?
...OKAY.
OKAY!
GOOD NIGHT...!
slam
...KUDO-KUN NEVER STOPS REVEALING NEW SURPRISES.


AND...
...SAIGA LEFT A MESSAGE FOR YOU, RIKUO.
JUST TO SAY HE HASN'T TURNED UP ANY NEW INFORMATION REGARDING TSUKIKO-SAN'S WHEREABOUTS.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TRY OTHER SOURCES ...?
NO. IF SAIGA CAN'T FIND ANYTHING, I DOUBT ANYONE CAN.


I WISH I COULD HELP YOU MORE, RIKUO.
IF SHE WASN'T MORE POWERFUL THAN MYSELF, I COULD READ HER FUTURE...


...TSUKIKO IS ALIVE.
I'LL FIND OUT WHERE SHE IS...AND I WILL BRING HER BACK.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Pmff
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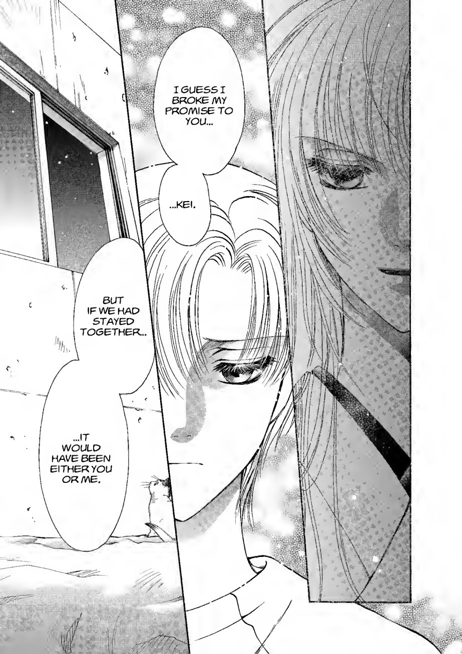
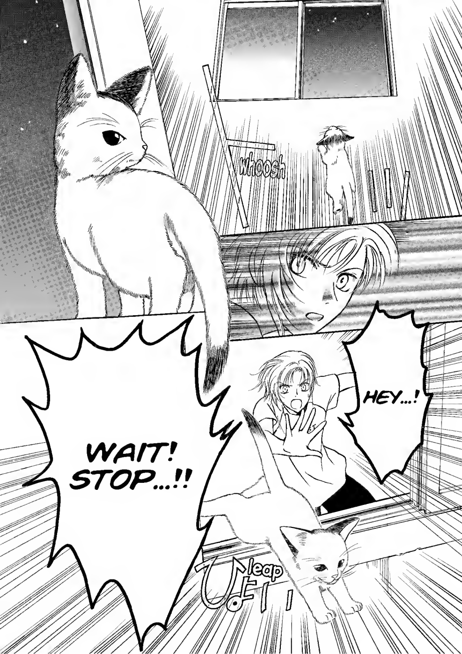
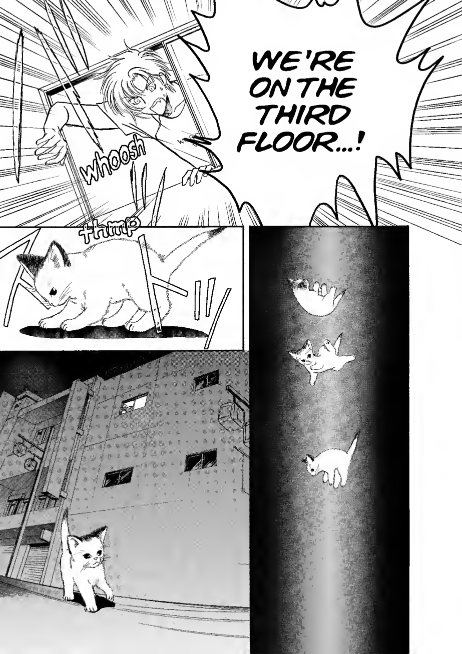
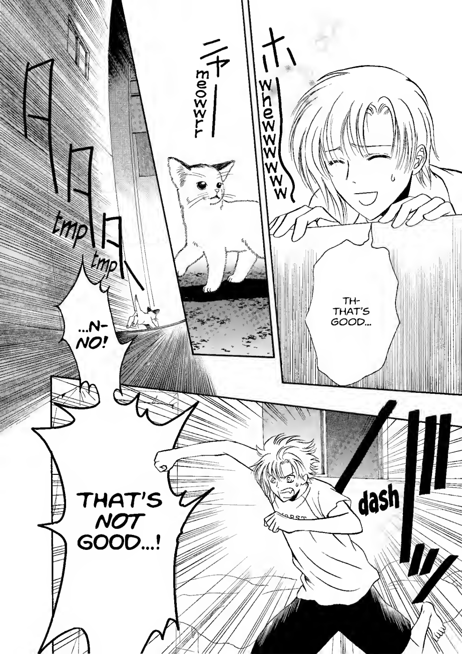
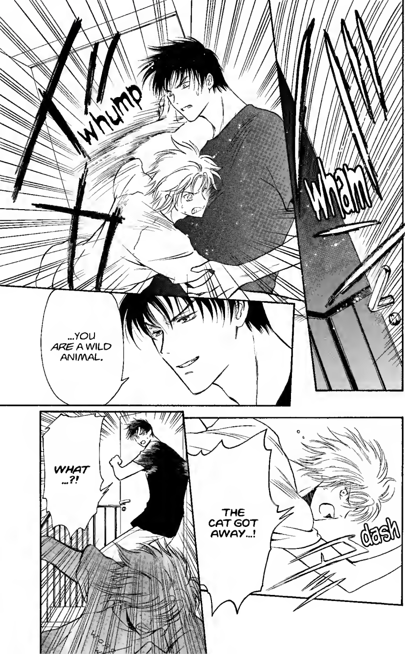
Pmff
MAN...
...WHAT A STRANGE DREAM...!

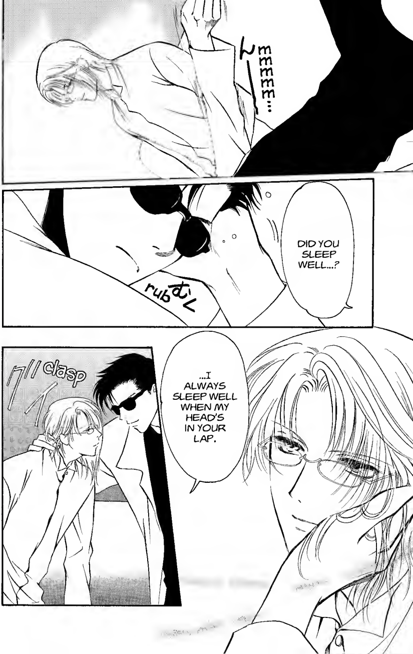

I GUESS I BROKE MY PROMISE TO YOU...
...KEI.
BUT IF WE HAD STAYED TOGETHER...
...IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EITHER YOU OR ME.

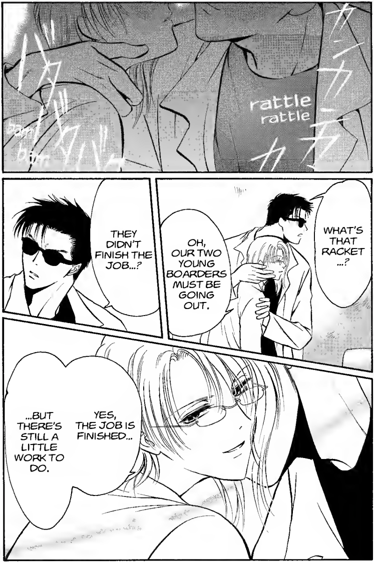

whoosh
HEY...!
WAIT! STOP...!!
ひょい
leap

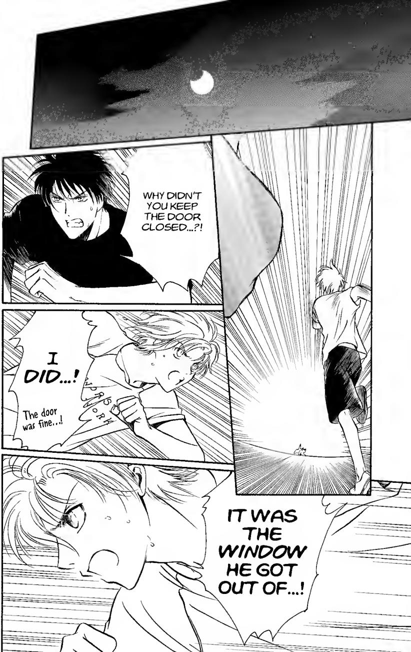

WE'RE ON THE THIRD FLOOR...!
whoosh
thmp

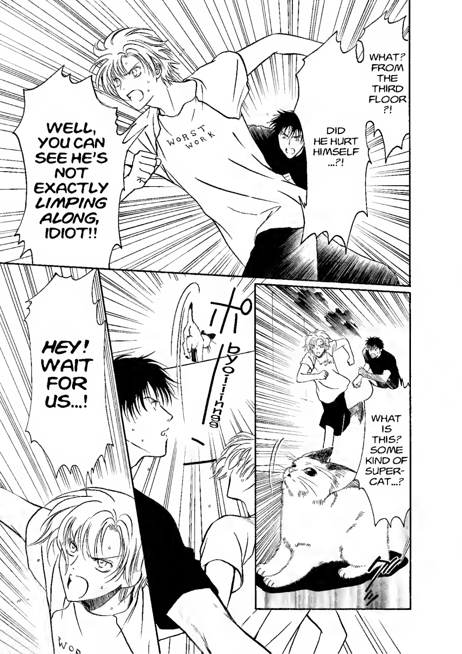

ホー
wheewwwwww
TH- THAT'S GOOD...
ニャー
meowwrr
タタタ
tmp
tmp
...N- NO!
THAT'S NOT GOOD...!
dash

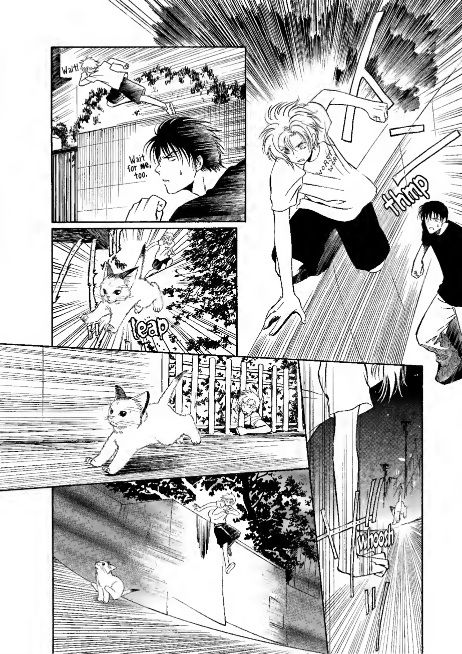

wham
whump
...YOU ARE A WILD ANIMAL.
dash
THE CAT GOT AWAY...!
WHAT ...?!

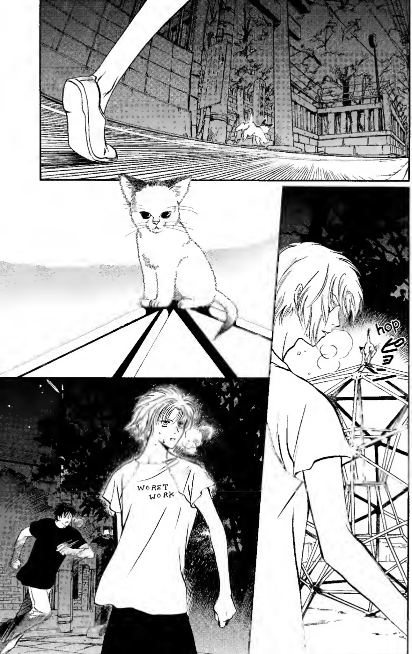

ん mmmmm...
DID YOU SLEEP WELL...?
rub むく
...I ALWAYS SLEEP WELL WHEN MY HEAD'S IN YOUR LAP.
クイ clasp

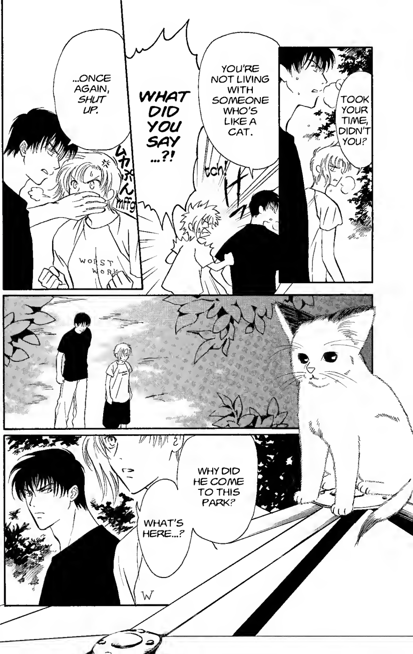

カチャカチャ
rattle rattle
バタバタ
WHAT'S THAT RACKET ...?
OH, OUR TWO YOUNG BOARDERS MUST BE GOING OUT.
THEY DIDN'T FINISH THE JOB...?
YES, THE JOB IS FINISHED...
...BUT THERE'S STILL A LITTLE WORK TO DO.

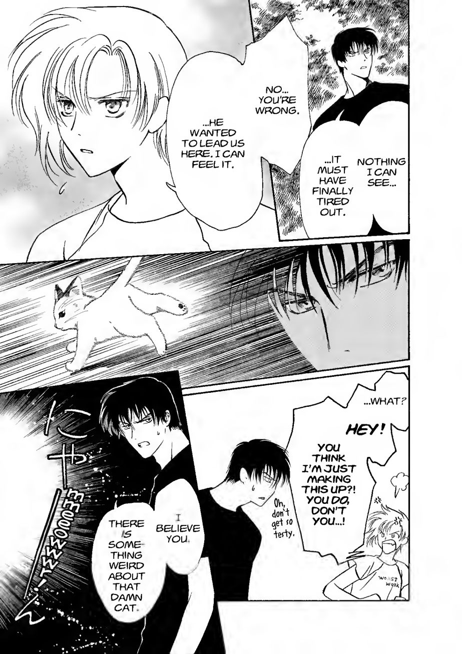

WHY DIDN'T YOU KEEP THE DOOR CLOSED...?!
I DID...!
The door was fine...!
IT WAS THE WINDOW HE GOT OUT OF...!

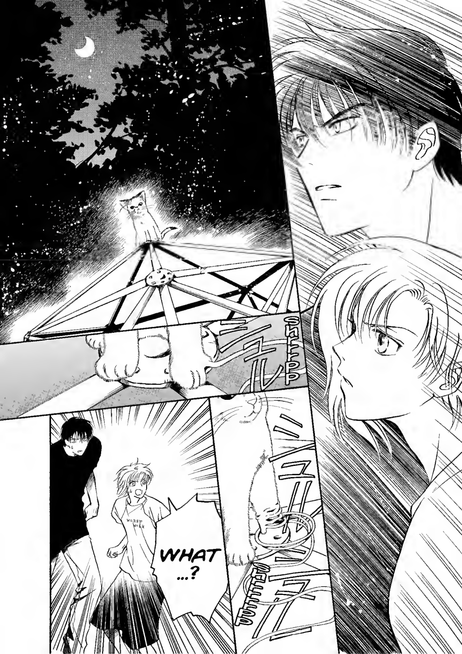

WHAT? FROM THE THIRD FLOOR?!
DID HE HURT HIMSELF...?!
WORST WORK
WELL, YOU CAN SEE HE'S NOT EXACTLY LIMPING ALONG, IDIOT!!
WHAT IS THIS? SOME KIND OF SUPER-CAT...?
ポー
byoiiiings
HEY! WAIT FOR US...!
WOR

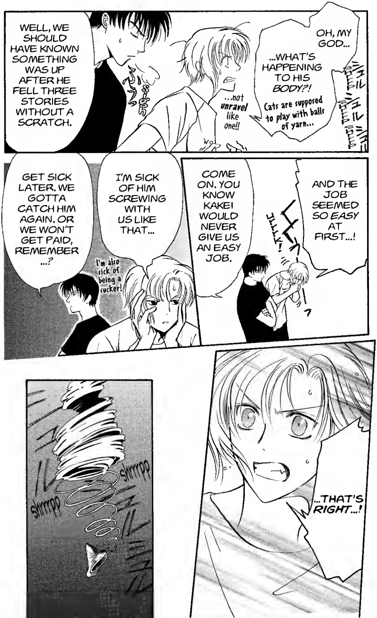

Wait!
Wait for me, too.
thmp
leap
whoosh


hop
ピョーン
WORST WORK


TOOK YOUR TIME, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU'RE NOT LIVING WITH SOMEONE WHO'S LIKE A CAT.
tch!
WHAT DID YOU SAY ...?!
...ONCE AGAIN, SHUT UP.
ムカぷん
mffg
WORST WORK
WHY DID HE COME TO THIS PARK?
WHAT'S HERE...?

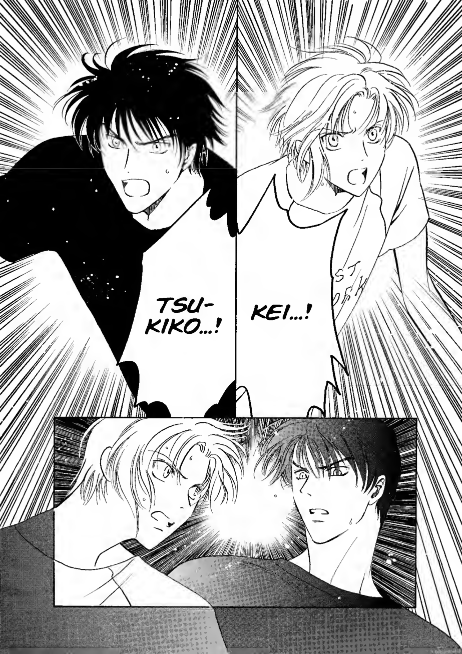

NOTHING I CAN SEE...
...IT MUST HAVE FINALLY TIRED OUT.
NO... YOU'RE WRONG.
...HE WANTED TO LEAD US HERE. I CAN FEEL IT.
...WHAT?
HEY!
YOU THINK I'M JUST MAKING THIS UP?! YOU DO, DON'T YOU...!
WORST WORK
Oh, don't get so testy.
I BELIEVE YOU.
THERE IS SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT THAT DAMN CAT.
にゃ—meeowww!ん

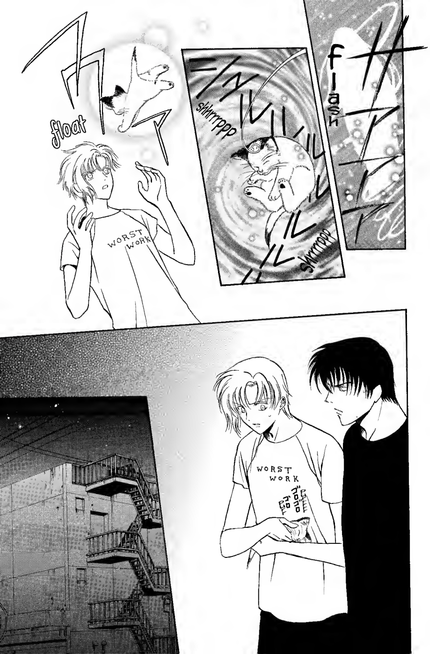

シュル
SHRRPP
シュルシュル
SHRRRRRP
WHAT ...?

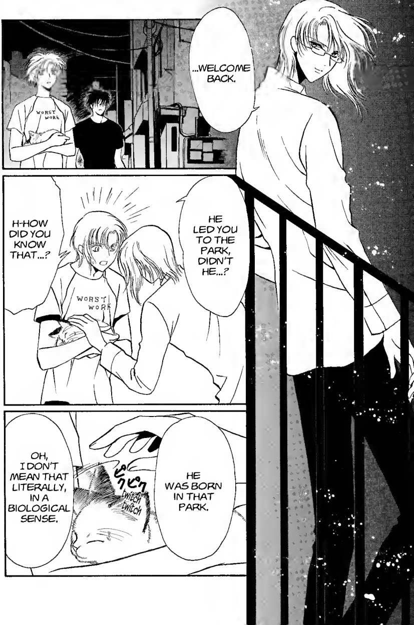

OH, MY GOD...
...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIS *BODY?!*
Cats are supposed to play with balls of yarn...
...not **unravel** like one!!
SHFFP
SHFFP
SHFFP
SIGH
WELL, WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN SOMETHING WAS UP AFTER HE FELL THREE STORIES WITHOUT A SCRATCH.
AND THE JOB SEEMED SO *EASY* AT FIRST...!
URRRK!
COME ON. YOU KNOW KAKEI WOULD NEVER GIVE US AN EASY JOB.
I'M SICK OF HIM SCREWING WITH US LIKE THAT...
I'm also sick of being a sucker!
GET SICK LATER. WE GOTTA CATCH HIM AGAIN. OR WE WON'T GET PAID, REMEMBER...?
...THAT'S *RIGHT*...!
shrrrpp
shrrrpp

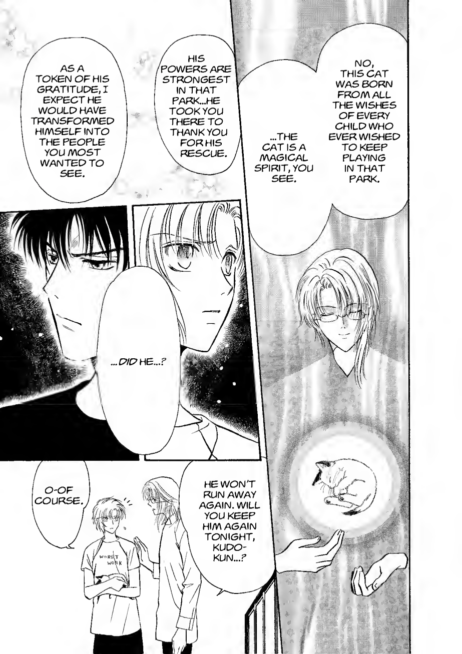
SHOOOO
SHOOOO
SHOOOO

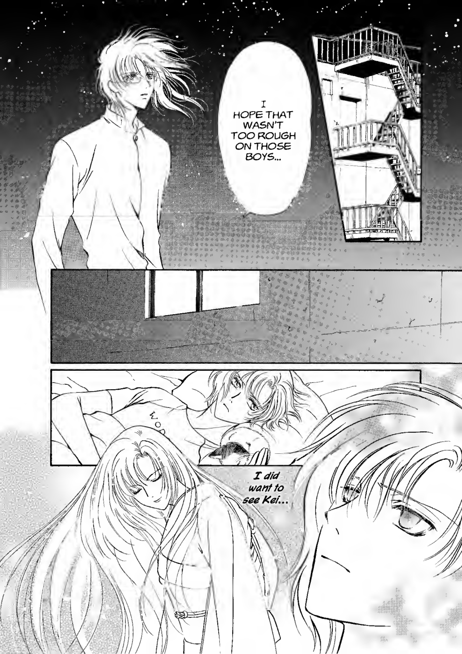
SHOOOO
SHOOOO

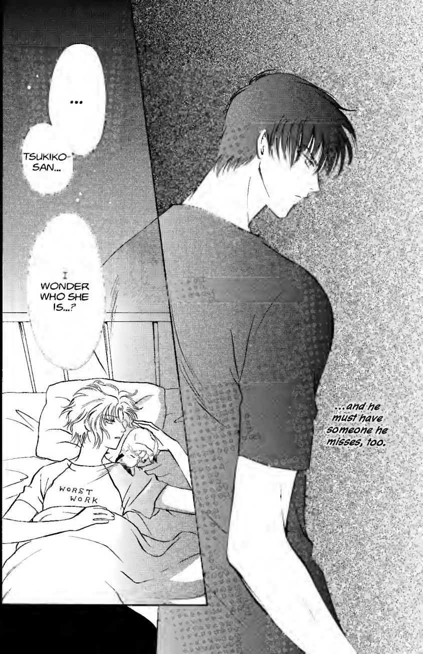

KEI...!
TSU-KIKO...!


サァァァァ
flash
シュルルルルルル
shrrrpp
shrrrpp
フワァ
float
WORST WORK
WORST WORK
ゴロゴロ
PURRR
ゴロ
PURR


...WELCOME BACK.
WORST WORK
HE LED YOU TO THE PARK, DIDN'T HE...?
H-HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT...?
WORST WORK
HE WAS BORN IN THAT PARK.
ピクピク
twitch twitch
OH, I DON'T MEAN THAT LITERALLY, IN A BIOLOGICAL SENSE.


NO, THIS CAT WAS BORN FROM ALL THE WISHES OF EVERY CHILD WHO EVER WISHED TO KEEP PLAYING IN THAT PARK.
...THE CAT IS A MAGICAL SPIRIT, YOU SEE.
HIS POWERS ARE STRONGEST IN THAT PARK...HE TOOK YOU THERE TO THANK YOU FOR HIS RESCUE.
AS A TOKEN OF HIS GRATITUDE, I EXPECT HE WOULD HAVE TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO THE PEOPLE YOU MOST WANTED TO SEE.
...DID HE...?
HE WON'T RUN AWAY AGAIN. WILL YOU KEEP HIM AGAIN TONIGHT, KUDO-KUN...?
O-OF COURSE.
WORST WORK


I HOPE THAT WASN'T TOO ROUGH ON THOSE BOYS...
WO
I did want to see Kei...

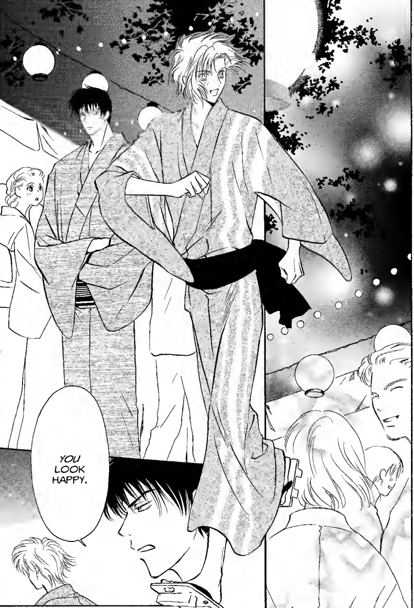

...
TSUKIKO-SAN...
I WONDER WHO SHE IS...?
WORST WORK
...and he must have someone he misses, too.

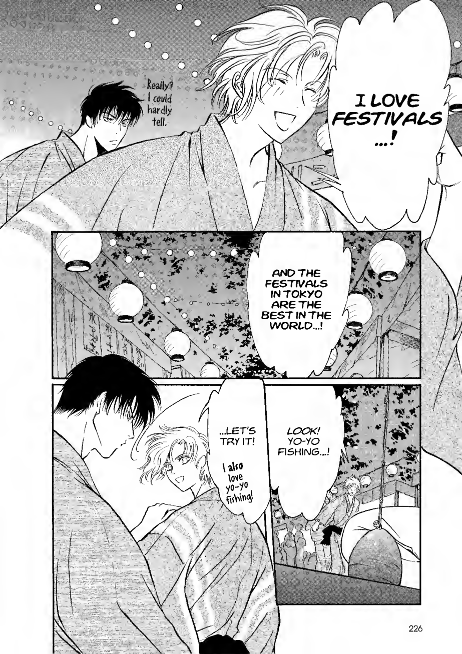
LEGAL DRUG

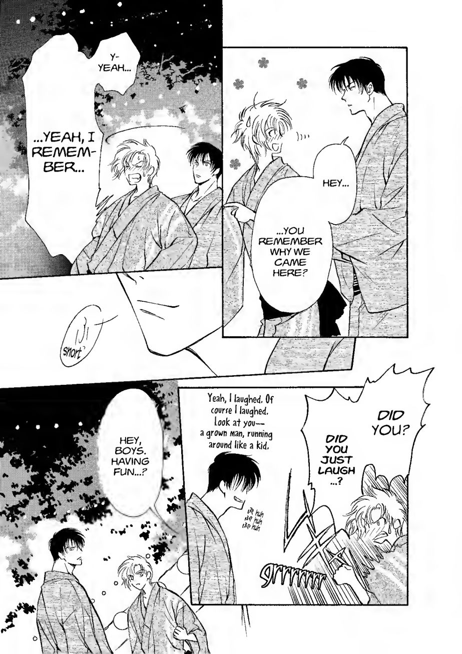
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局

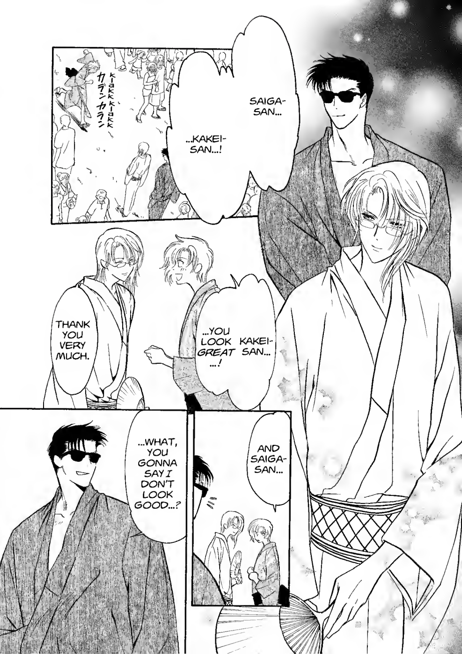
DRUG NO.07

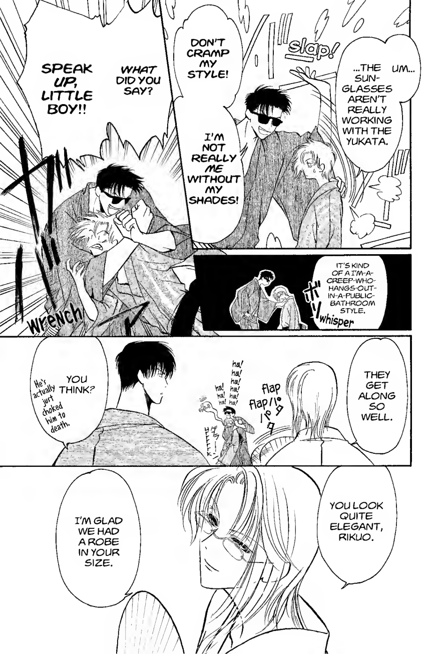
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

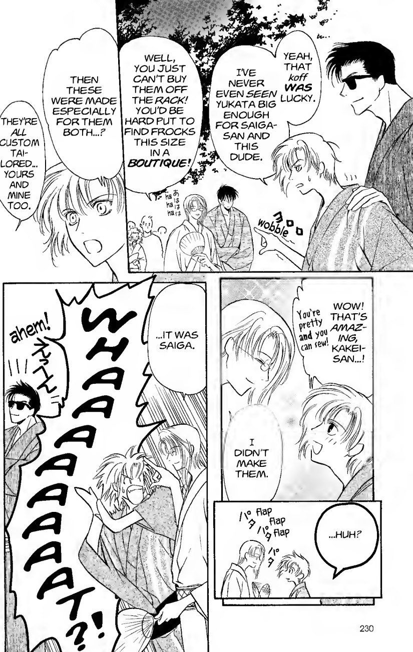

YOU LOOK HAPPY.

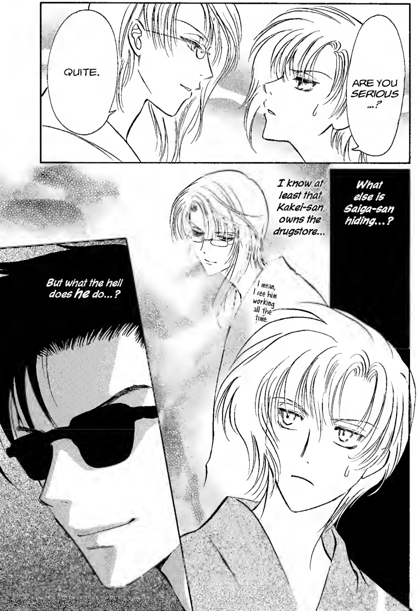

I LOVE FESTIVALS ...!
Really? I could hardly tell.
AND THE FESTIVALS IN TOKYO ARE THE BEST IN THE WORLD...!
LOOK! YO-YO FISHING...!
...LET'S TRY IT!
I also love yo-yo fishing!

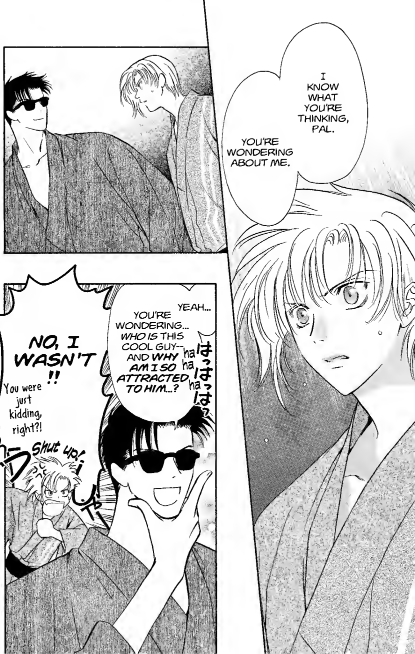

HEY...
...YOU REMEMBER WHY WE CAME HERE?
Y-YEAH...
...YEAH, I REMEMBER...
snort
DID YOU?
DID YOU JUST LAUGH ...?
Yeah, I laughed. Of course I laughed. Look at you–– a grown man, running around like a kid.
huh
huh
huh
grrrrrrr
HEY, BOYS. HAVING FUN...?

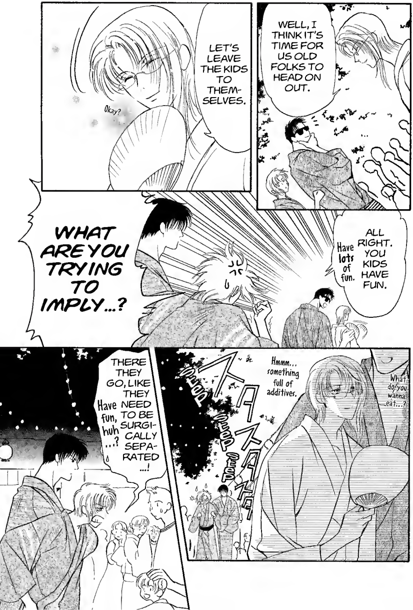

klakk klakk
カラン カラン
SAIGA-SAN...
...KAKEI-SAN...!
...YOU LOOK GREAT ...! KAKEI-SAN...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
AND SAIGA-SAN...
...WHAT, YOU GONNA SAY *I* DON'T LOOK GOOD...?

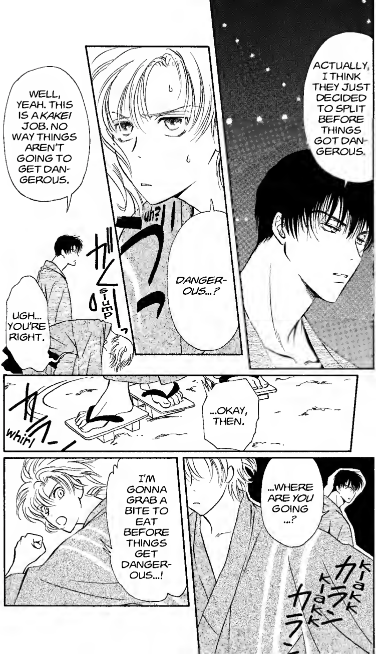

Slap!
...THE UM... SUN-GLASSES AREN'T REALLY WORKING WITH THE YUKATA.
DON'T CRAMP MY STYLE!
I'M NOT REALLY *ME* WITHOUT MY SHADES!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
SPEAK *UP*, LITTLE BOY!!
Wrench
IT'S KIND OF A I'M-A-CREEP-WHO-HANGS-OUT-IN-A-PUBLIC-BATHROOM STYLE.
whisper
THEY GET ALONG SO WELL.
flap flap パタ パタ
ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!
YOU THINK?
He's actually just choked him to death.
YOU LOOK QUITE ELEGANT, RIKUO.
I'M GLAD WE HAD A ROBE IN YOUR SIZE.

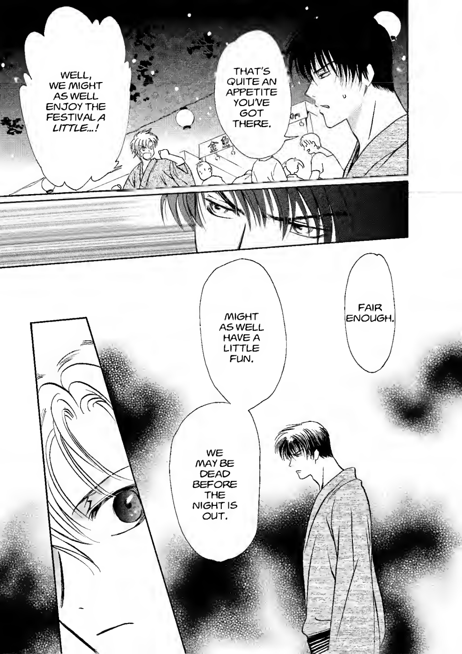

YEAH, THAT *koff* **WAS** LUCKY.
I'VE NEVER EVEN *SEEN* YUKATA BIG ENOUGH FOR SAIGA-SAN AND THIS DUDE.
wobble
ha あ ha は ha は
WELL, YOU JUST CAN'T BUY THEM OFF THE *RACK!* YOU'D BE HARD PUT TO FIND FROCKS THIS SIZE IN A ***BOUTIQUE!***
THEN THESE WERE MADE ESPECIALLY FOR THEM BOTH...?
THEY'RE *ALL* CUSTOM TAILORED... YOURS AND MINE TOO.
WOW! THAT'S *AMAZING,* KAKEI-SAN...!
You're pretty and you can sew!
I DIDN'T MAKE THEM.
...HUH?
パタ Flap Flap パタ Flap パタ
...IT WAS SAIGA.
WHAAAAAAAAAT?!
ahem! えっへん

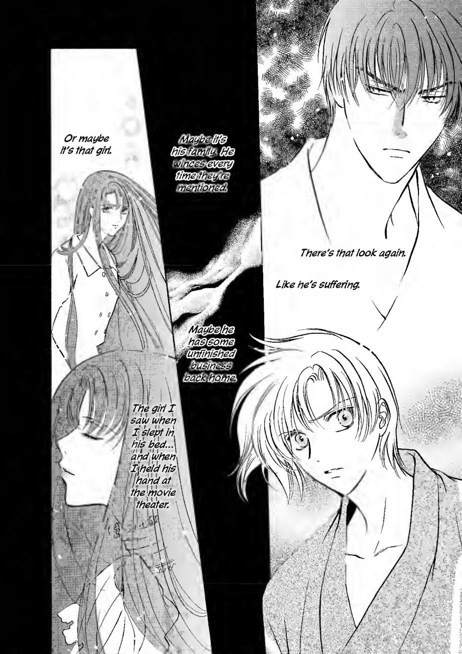

ARE YOU SERIOUS ...?
QUITE.
What else is Saiga-san hiding...?
I know at least that Kakei-san owns the drugstore...
I mean, I see him working all the time.
But what the hell does *he* do...?

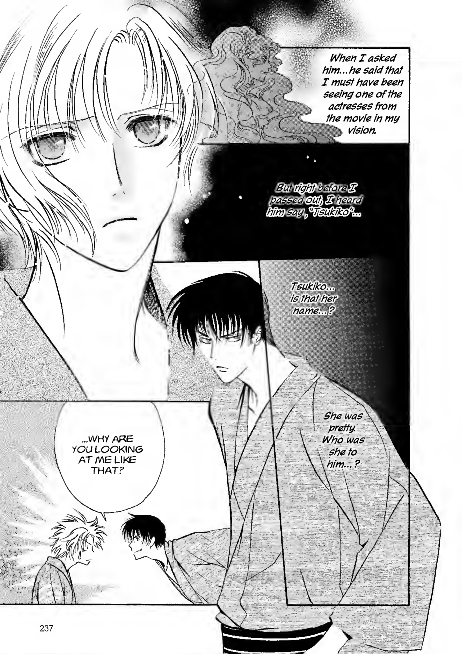

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, PAL.
YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT ME.
YEAH... YOU'RE WONDERING... *WHO IS* THIS COOL GUY-- AND *WHY AM I SO ATTRACTED TO HIM...?*
ha ha ha はっはっはっ
NO, I WASN'T!!
You were just kidding, right?!
Shut up!

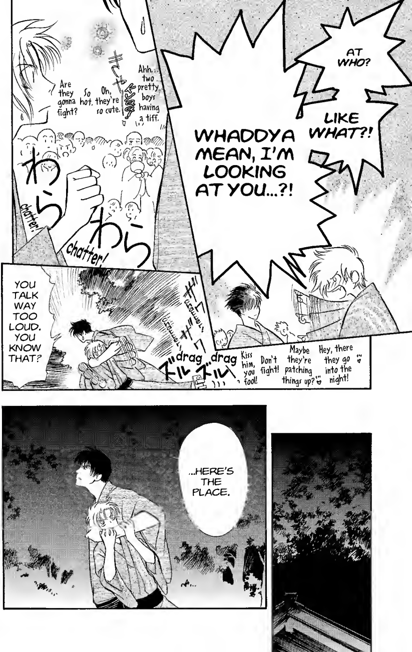

WELL, I THINK IT'S TIME FOR US OLD FOLKS TO HEAD ON OUT.
LET'S LEAVE THE KIDS TO THEMSELVES.
Okay?
ALL RIGHT. YOU KIDS HAVE FUN.
Have lots of fun.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO IMPLY...?
What do you wanna eat...?
Hmmm... something full of additives.
スタスタスタスタ
Step Step Step Step
THERE THEY GO, LIKE THEY NEED TO BE SURGICALLY SEPARATED...!
Have fun, huh...?

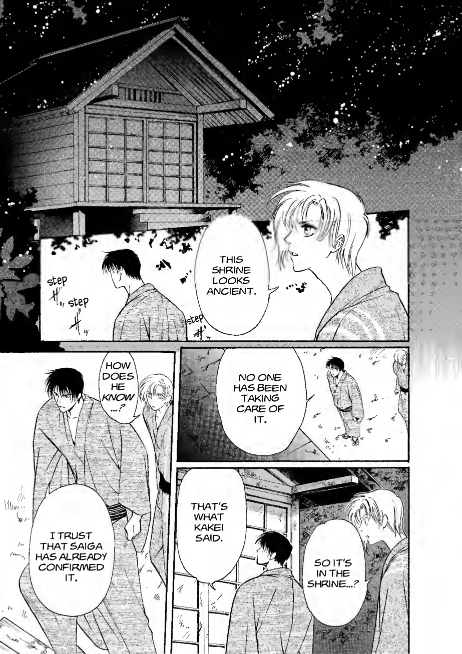

ACTUALLY, I THINK THEY JUST DECIDED TO SPLIT BEFORE THINGS GOT DANGEROUS.
uh?!
DANGEROUS...?
WELL, YEAH. THIS IS A *KAKEI* JOB. NO WAY THINGS AREN'T GOING TO GET DANGEROUS.
slump
UGH... YOU'RE RIGHT.
...OKAY, THEN.
whirl
...WHERE ARE *YOU* GOING ...?
klakk
klakk
I'M GONNA GRAB A BITE TO EAT BEFORE THINGS GET DANGEROUS...!

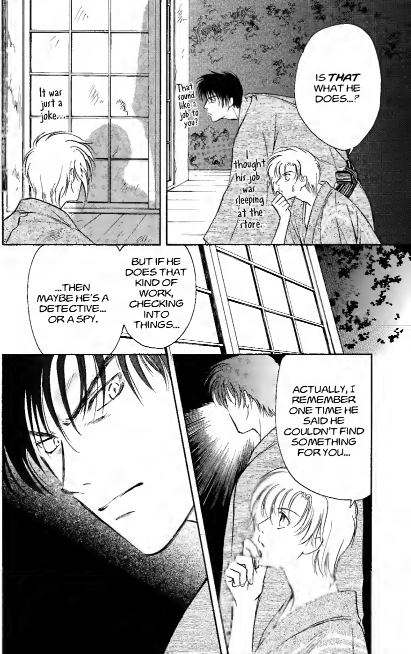

THAT'S QUITE AN APPETITE YOU'VE GOT THERE.
WELL, WE MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY THE FESTIVAL *A LITTLE*...!
FAIR ENOUGH.
MIGHT AS WELL HAVE A LITTLE FUN.
WE MAY BE DEAD BEFORE THE NIGHT IS OUT.

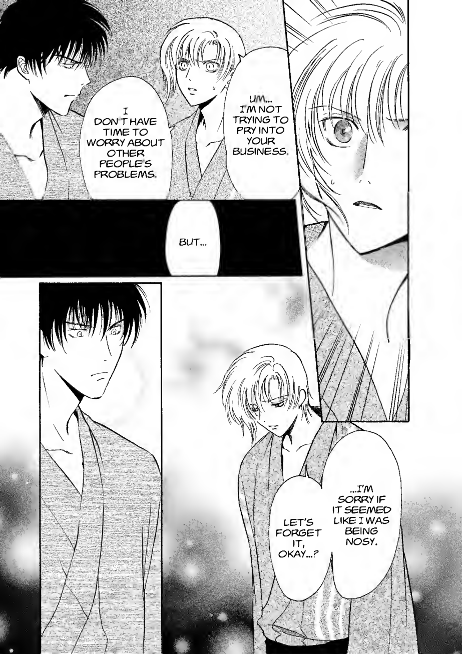

There's that look again.
Like he's suffering.
Maybe it's his family. He winces every time they're mentioned.
Or maybe it's that girl.
Maybe he has some unfinished business back home.
The girl I saw when I slept in his bed... and when I held his hand at the movie theater.

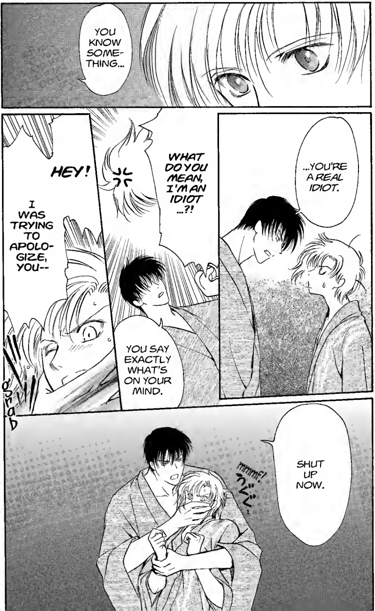

When I asked him...he said that I must have been seeing one of the actresses from the movie in my vision.
But right before I passed out, I heard him say, "Tsukiko"...
Tsukiko... is that her name...?
She was pretty. Who was she to him...?
...WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

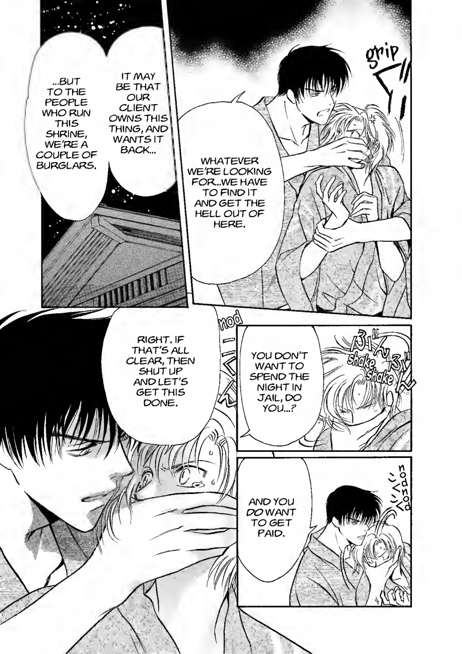

AT WHO?
LIKE WHAT?!
WHADDYA MEAN, I'M LOOKING AT YOU...?!
Ahh... two pretty boys having a tiff.
きゃ〜
Oh, they're so cute.
So hot.
Are they gonna fight?
わら
chatter!
わら
chatter!
Hey, there they go into the night!
Maybe they're patching things up?
Don't fight!
Kiss him, you fool!
ザワ
chatter!
ザワ
chatter!
ズルズル
drag drag
YOU TALK WAY TOO LOUD. YOU KNOW THAT?
...HERE'S THE PLACE.

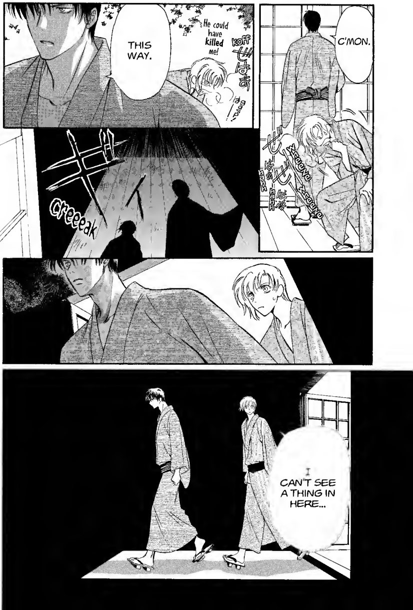

THIS SHRINE LOOKS ANCIENT.
step
step
step
NO ONE HAS BEEN TAKING CARE OF IT.
HOW DOES HE *KNOW* ...?
SO IT'S IN THE SHRINE...?
THAT'S WHAT KAKEI SAID.
I TRUST THAT SAIGA HAS ALREADY CONFIRMED IT.

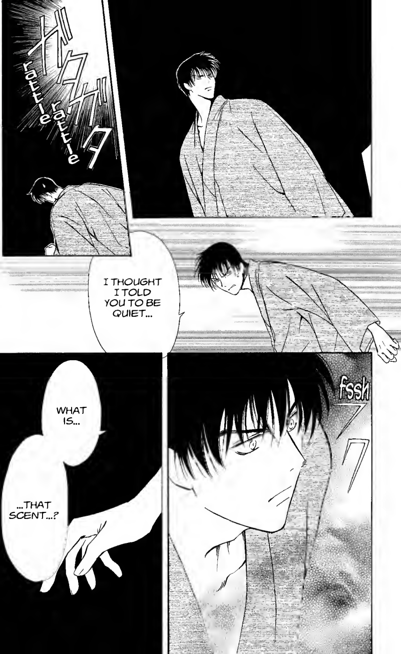

IS *THAT* WHAT HE DOES...?
That sound like a job to you?
I thought his job was sleeping at the store.
It was just a joke...
BUT IF HE DOES THAT KIND OF WORK, CHECKING INTO THINGS...
...THEN MAYBE HE'S A DETECTIVE... OR A SPY.
ACTUALLY, I REMEMBER ONE TIME HE SAID HE COULDN'T FIND SOMETHING FOR YOU...

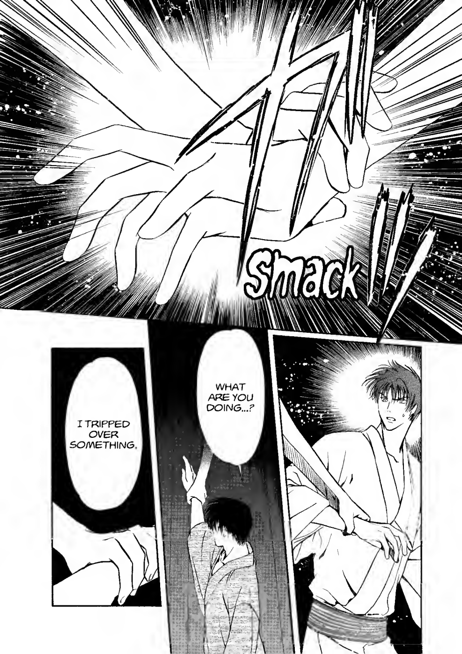

UM... I'M NOT TRYING TO PRY INTO YOUR BUSINESS.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS.
BUT...
...I'M SORRY IF IT SEEMED LIKE I WAS BEING NOSY.
LET'S FORGET IT, OKAY...?

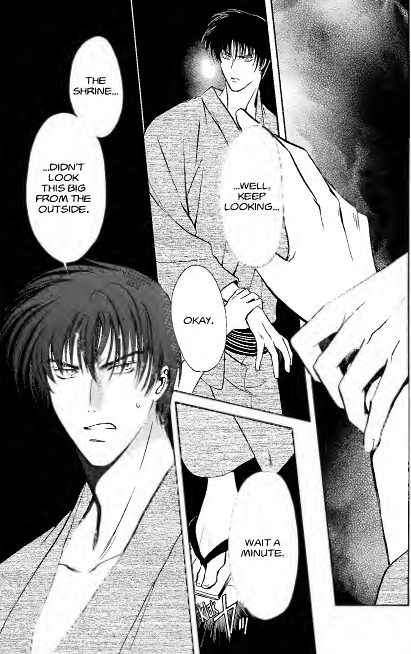

YOU KNOW SOME-THING...
...YOU'RE A REAL IDIOT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M AN IDIOT ...?!
HEY!
I WAS TRYING TO APOLO-GIZE, YOU--
YOU SAY EXACTLY WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND.
grab
SHUT UP NOW.
mmmf!


IT MAY BE THAT OUR CLIENT OWNS THIS THING, AND WANTS IT BACK...
...BUT TO THE PEOPLE WHO RUN THIS SHRINE, WE'RE A COUPLE OF BURGLARS.
grip
WHATEVER WE'RE LOOKING FOR...WE HAVE TO FIND IT AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
YOU DON'T WANT TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN JAIL, DO YOU...?
shake shake
AND YOU *DO* WANT TO GET PAID.
nod nod
nod
RIGHT. IF THAT'S ALL CLEAR, THEN SHUT UP AND LET'S GET THIS DONE.


C'MON.
wheeze wheeze
huff huff
THIS WAY.
He could have killed me!
koff
gasp
creeeak
I CAN'T SEE A THING IN HERE...


ガタガタ
rattle rattle
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO BE QUIET...
fssh
WHAT IS...
...THAT SCENT...?

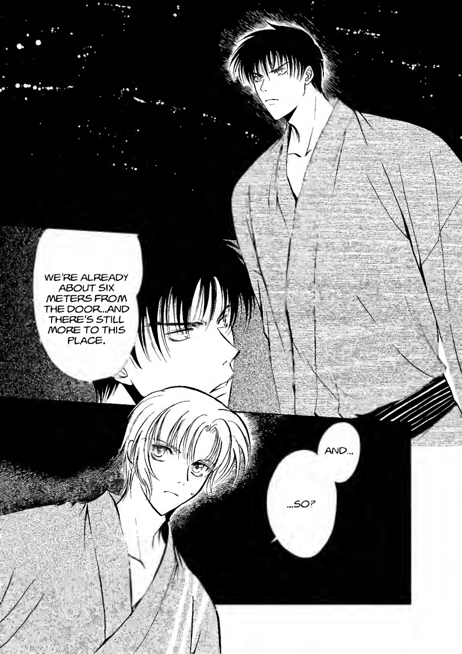

Smack!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?
I TRIPPED OVER SOMETHING.

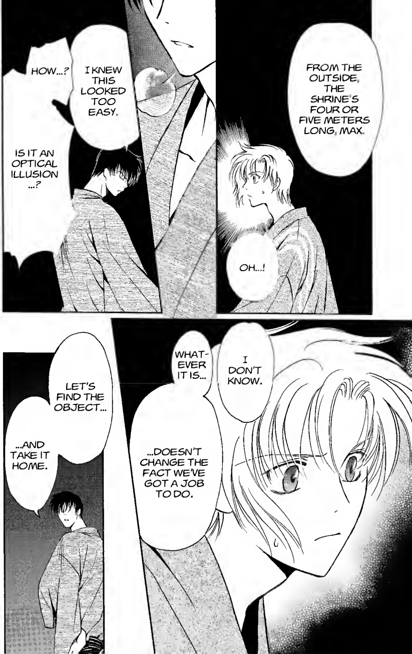

THE SHRINE...
...DIDN'T LOOK THIS BIG FROM THE OUTSIDE.
...WELL, KEEP LOOKING...
OKAY.
WAIT A MINUTE.
klak カッ

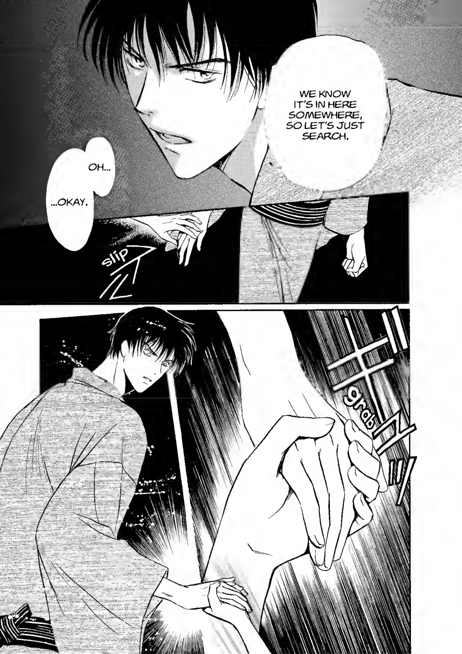
DRUG NO.08

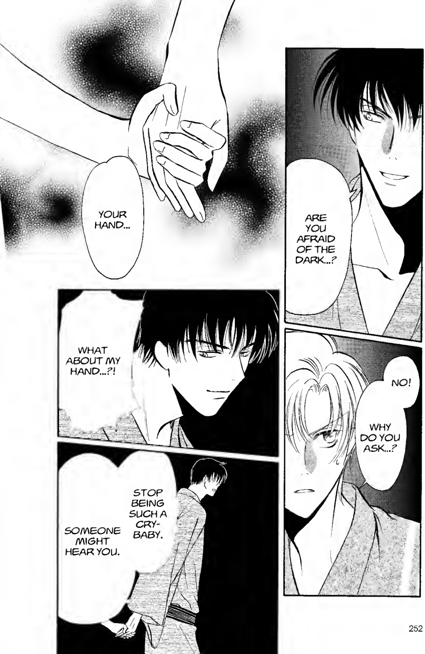
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

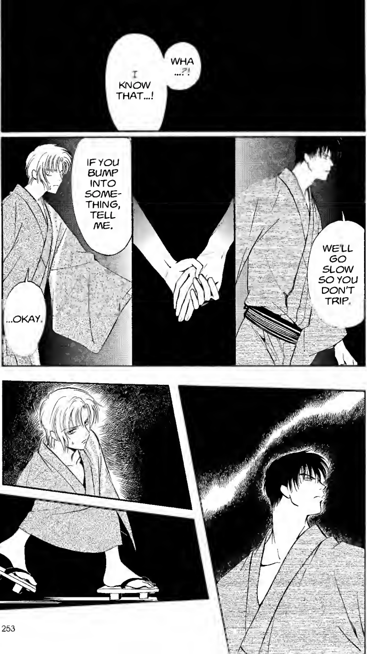
LEGAL DRUG

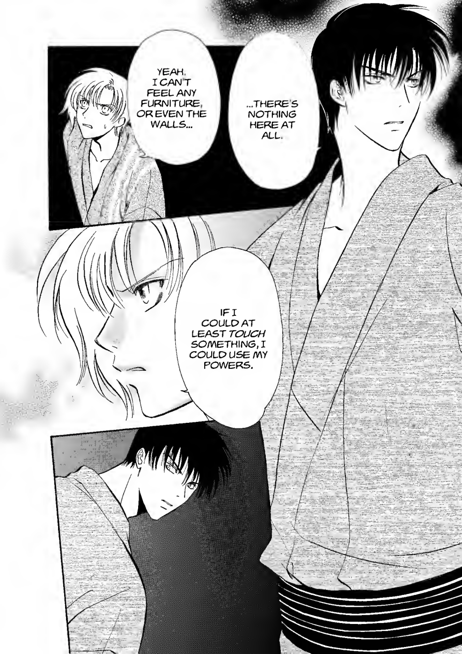

WE'RE ALREADY ABOUT SIX METERS FROM THE DOOR...AND THERE'S STILL MORE TO THIS PLACE.
AND...
...SO?

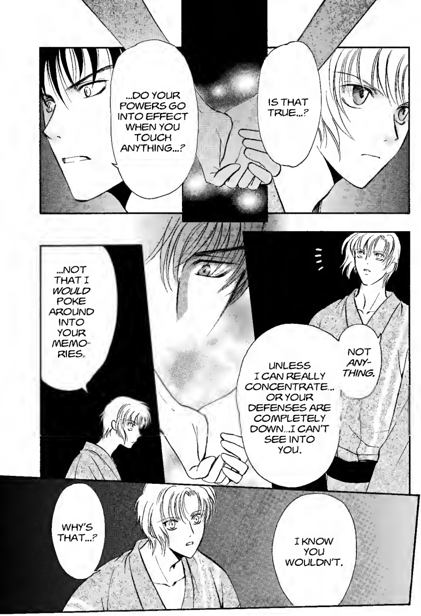

FROM THE OUTSIDE, THE SHRINE'S FOUR OR FIVE METERS LONG, MAX.
OH...!
I KNEW THIS LOOKED TOO EASY.
HOW...?
IS IT AN OPTICAL ILLUSION ...?
I DON'T KNOW.
WHATEVER IT IS...
...DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO.
LET'S FIND THE OBJECT...
...AND TAKE IT HOME.

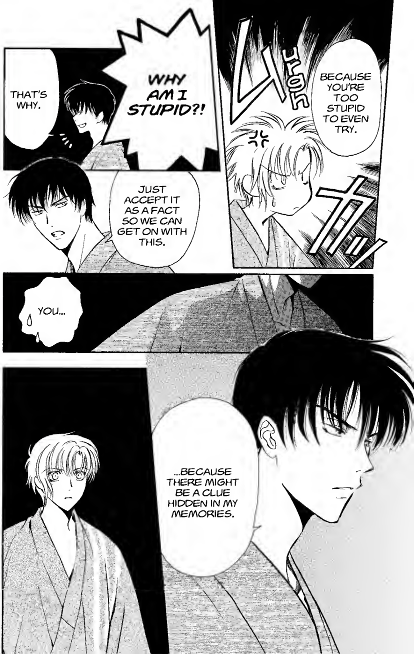

WE KNOW IT'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE, SO LET'S JUST SEARCH.
OH...
...OKAY.
slip
grab

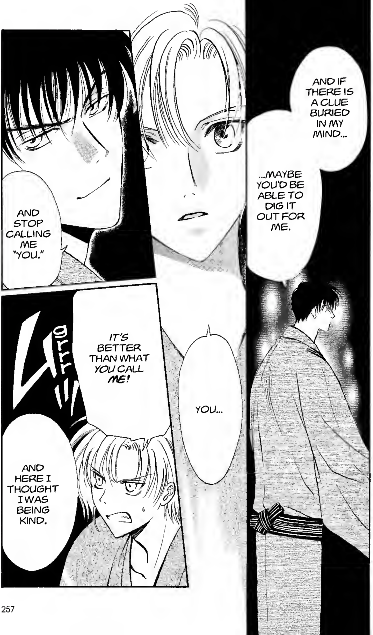

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK...?
NO!
WHY DO YOU ASK...?
YOUR HAND...
WHAT ABOUT MY HAND...?!
STOP BEING SUCH A CRY-BABY.
SOMEONE MIGHT HEAR YOU.

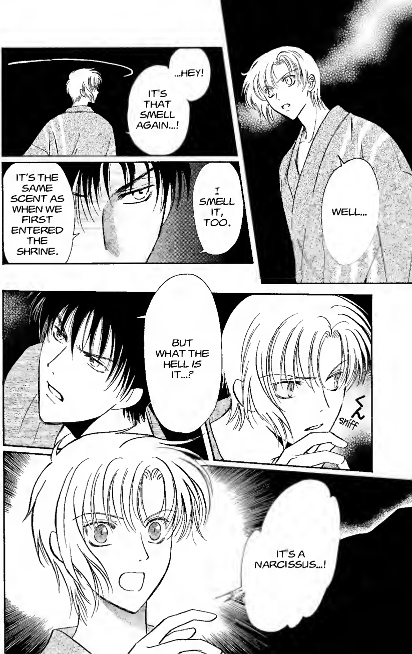

WHA ...?!
I KNOW THAT...!
WE'LL GO SLOW SO YOU DON'T TRIP.
IF YOU BUMP INTO SOME-THING, TELL ME.
...OKAY.

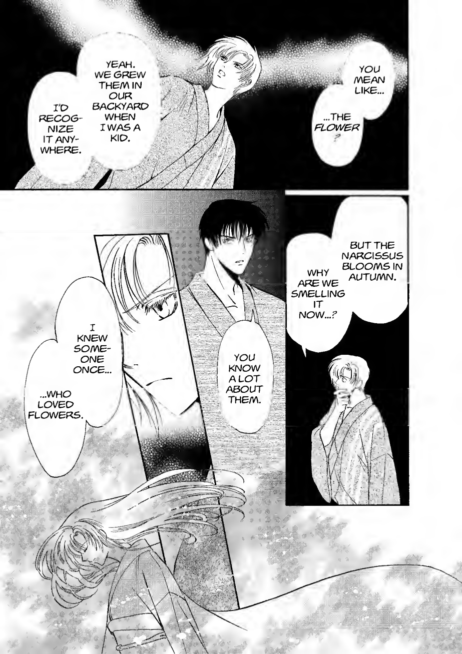

...THERE'S NOTHING HERE AT ALL.
YEAH. I CAN'T FEEL ANY FURNITURE, OR EVEN THE WALLS...
IF I COULD AT LEAST *TOUCH* SOMETHING, I COULD USE MY POWERS.

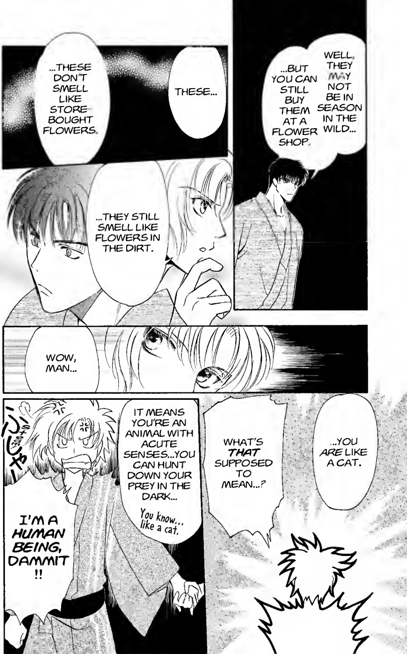

IS THAT TRUE...?
...DO YOUR POWERS GO INTO EFFECT WHEN YOU TOUCH ANYTHING...?
NOT *ANYTHING.*
UNLESS I CAN REALLY CONCENTRATE... OR YOUR DEFENSES ARE COMPLETELY DOWN...I CAN'T SEE INTO YOU.
...NOT THAT I *WOULD* POKE AROUND INTO YOUR *MEMORIES.*
I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T.
WHY'S THAT...?

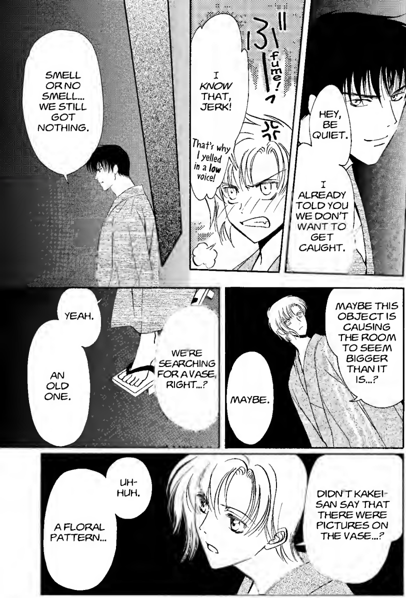

BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO EVEN TRY.
urgh
WHY AM I STUPID?!
THAT'S WHY.
JUST ACCEPT IT AS A FACT SO WE CAN GET ON WITH THIS.
YOU...
...BECAUSE THERE MIGHT BE A CLUE HIDDEN IN MY MEMORIES.

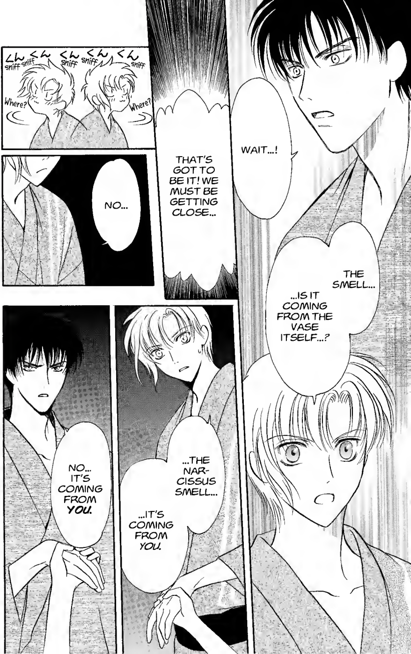

AND IF THERE IS A CLUE BURIED IN MY MIND...
...MAYBE YOU'D BE ABLE TO DIG IT OUT FOR ME.
AND STOP CALLING ME "YOU."
YOU...
IT'S BETTER THAN WHAT *YOU* CALL ***ME!***
grrr
AND HERE I THOUGHT I WAS BEING KIND.

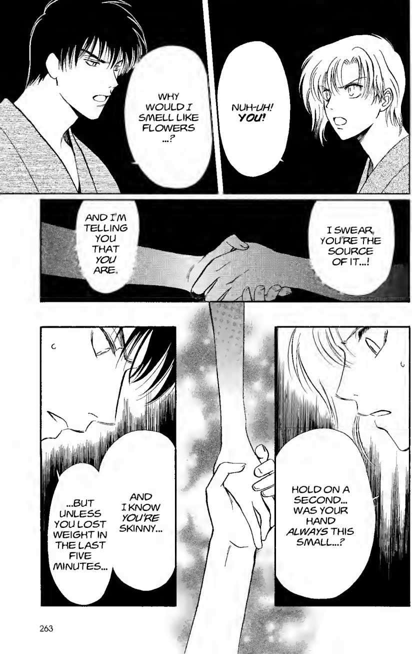

...HEY!
IT'S THAT SMELL AGAIN...!
WELL...
I SMELL IT, TOO.
IT'S THE SAME SCENT AS WHEN WE FIRST ENTERED THE SHRINE.
BUT WHAT THE HELL *IS* IT...?
くん
sniff
IT'S A NARCISSUS...!

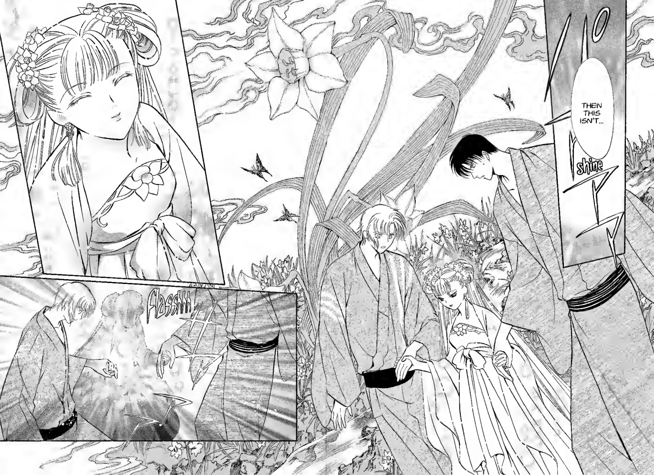

YOU MEAN LIKE...
...THE *FLOWER*?
YEAH. WE GREW THEM IN OUR BACKYARD WHEN I WAS A KID.
I'D RECOGNIZE IT ANYWHERE.
BUT THE NARCISSUS BLOOMS IN AUTUMN.
WHY ARE WE SMELLING IT NOW...?
YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT THEM.
I KNEW SOMEONE ONCE...
...WHO LOVED FLOWERS.

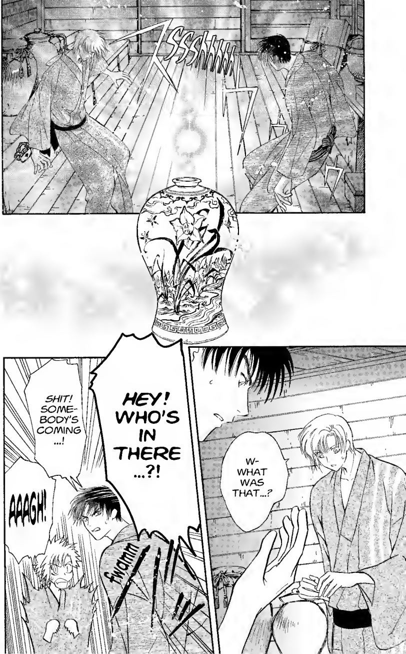

WELL, THEY MAY NOT BE IN SEASON IN THE WILD...
...BUT YOU CAN STILL BUY THEM AT A FLOWER SHOP.
THESE...
...THESE DON'T SMELL LIKE STORE-BOUGHT FLOWERS.
...THEY STILL SMELL LIKE FLOWERS IN THE DIRT.
WOW, MAN...
...YOU *ARE* LIKE A CAT.
WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN...?
IT MEANS YOU'RE AN ANIMAL WITH ACUTE SENSES...YOU CAN HUNT DOWN YOUR PREY IN THE DARK...
You know... like a cat.
ふしゃー
I'M A *HUMAN BEING*, DAMMIT!!

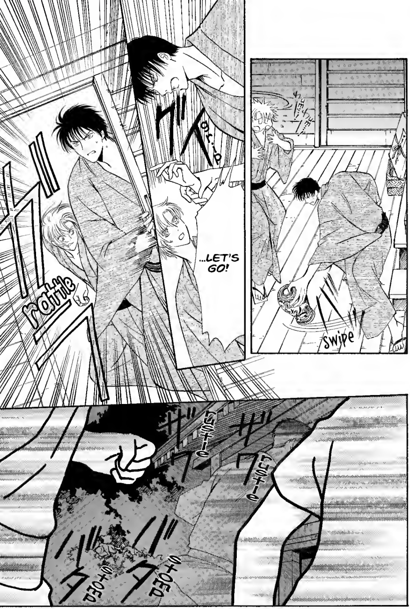

HEY, BE QUIET.
I ALREADY TOLD YOU WE DON'T WANT TO GET CAUGHT.
I KNOW THAT, JERK!
fume!
That's why I yelled in a low voice!
SMELL OR NO SMELL... WE STILL GOT NOTHING.
MAYBE THIS OBJECT IS CAUSING THE ROOM TO SEEM BIGGER THAN IT IS...?
MAYBE.
WE'RE SEARCHING FOR A VASE, RIGHT...?
YEAH.
AN OLD ONE.
DIDN'T KAKEI-SAN SAY THAT THERE WERE PICTURES ON THE VASE...?
UH-HUH.
A FLORAL PATTERN...

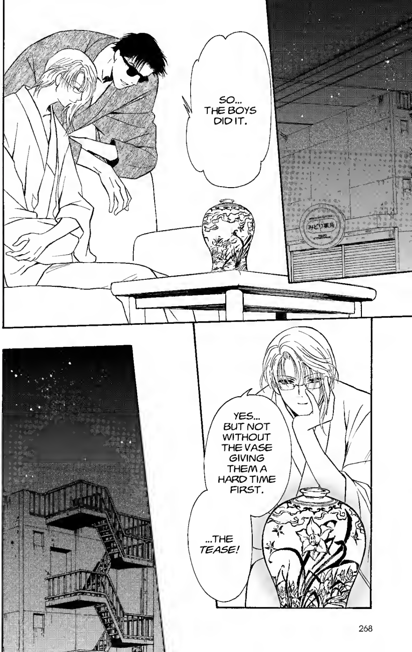

THAT'S GOT TO BE IT! WE MUST BE GETTING CLOSE...
くん くん くん くん くん
sniff sniff sniff sniff sniff sniff
Where?
Where?
NO...
WAIT...!
THE SMELL...
...IS IT COMING FROM THE VASE ITSELF...?
...THE NARCISSUS SMELL...
...IT'S COMING FROM YOU.
NO... IT'S COMING FROM YOU.

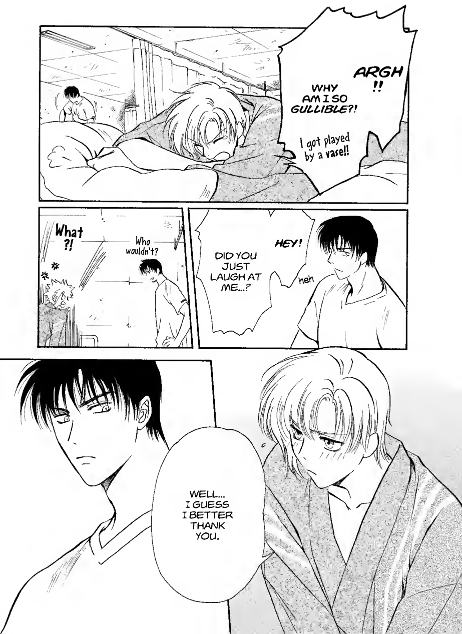

NUH-UH! *YOU!*
WHY WOULD *I* SMELL LIKE FLOWERS ...?
I SWEAR, YOU'RE THE SOURCE OF IT...!
AND I'M TELLING YOU THAT *YOU* ARE.
HOLD ON A SECOND... WAS YOUR HAND *ALWAYS* THIS SMALL...?
AND I KNOW *YOU'RE* SKINNY...
...BUT UNLESS YOU LOST WEIGHT IN THE LAST FIVE MINUTES...

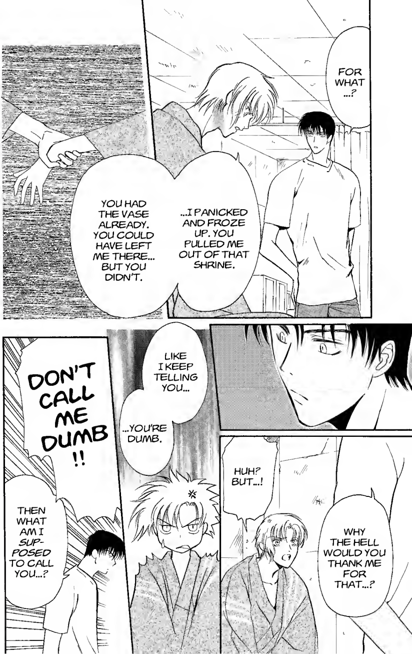

THEN THIS ISN'T...
shine
Flasshh!

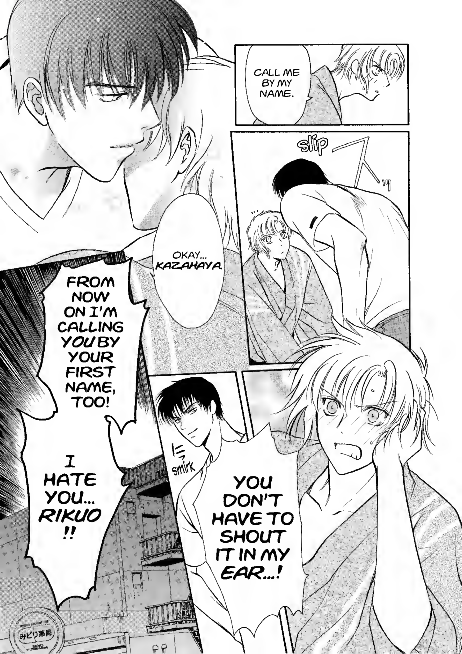

KSSShhhhh
W-WHAT WAS THAT...?
HEY! WHO'S IN THERE ...?!
SHIT! SOMEBODY'S COMING ...!
AAAGH!
fwamm


whim...!
whum...!
swipe
grip
...LET'S GO!
rattle
rustle
rustle
stomp
stomp


SO... THE BOYS DID IT.
みどり薬局
YES... BUT NOT WITHOUT THE VASE GIVING THEM A HARD TIME FIRST.
...THE *TEASE!*


ARGH!!
WHY AM I SO GULLIBLE?!
I got played by a vase!!
heh
HEY!
DID YOU JUST LAUGH AT ME...?
Who wouldn't?
What?!
WELL... I GUESS I BETTER THANK YOU.


FOR WHAT ...?
...I PANICKED AND FROZE UP. YOU PULLED ME OUT OF THAT SHRINE.
YOU HAD THE VASE ALREADY. YOU COULD HAVE LEFT ME THERE... BUT YOU DIDN'T.
LIKE I KEEP TELLING YOU...
...YOU'RE DUMB.
DON'T CALL ME DUMB!!
WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU THANK ME FOR THAT...?
HUH? BUT...!
THEN WHAT AM I SUP-POSED TO CALL YOU...?


CALL ME BY MY NAME.
slip
OKAY... KAZAHAYA.
FROM NOW ON I'M CALLING YOU BY YOUR FIRST NAME, TOO!
smirk
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOUT IT IN MY EAR...!
I HATE YOU... RIKUO!!
みどり薬局

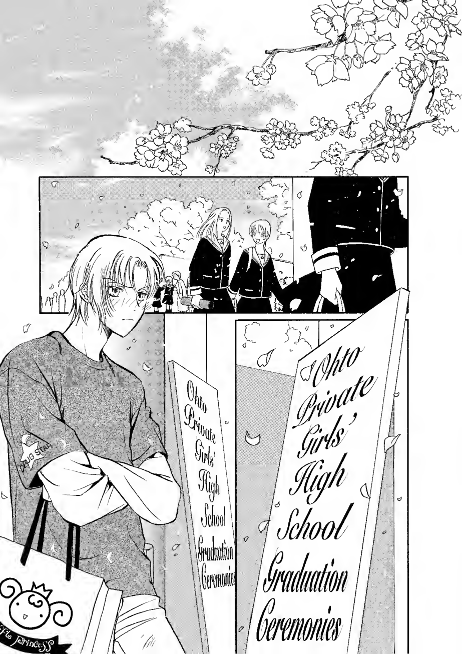
LEGAL DRUG

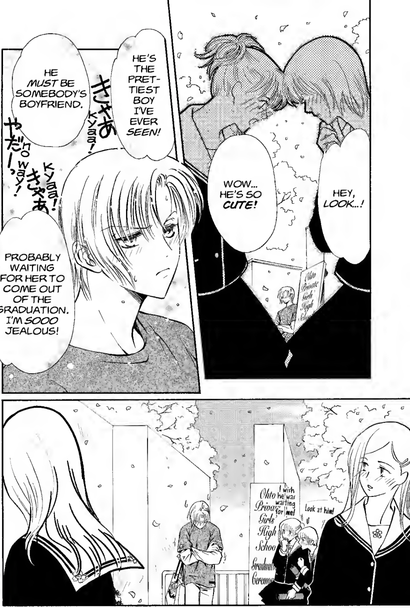
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局

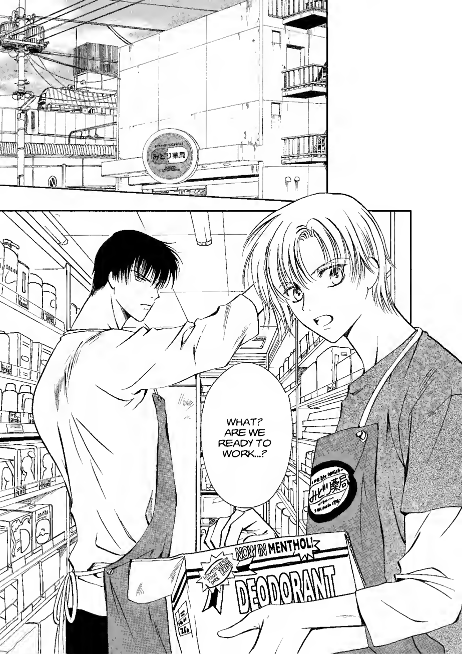
DRUG NO.09

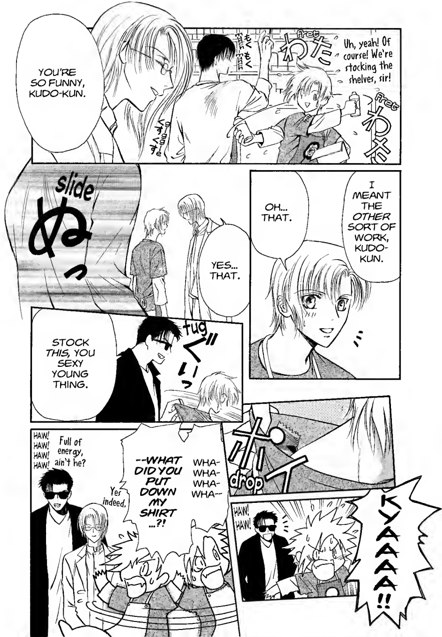
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

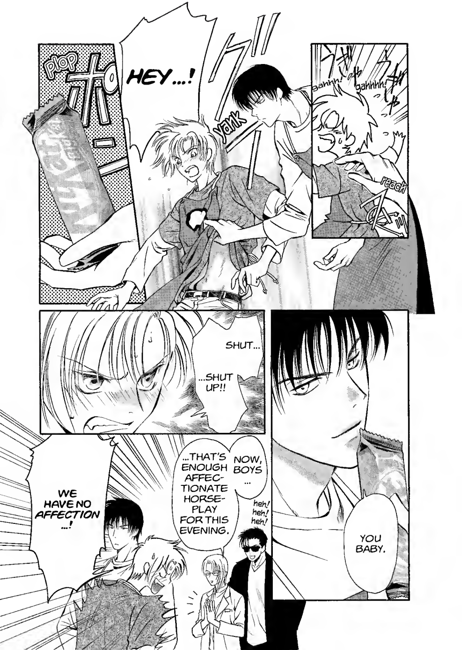
LEGAL DRUG

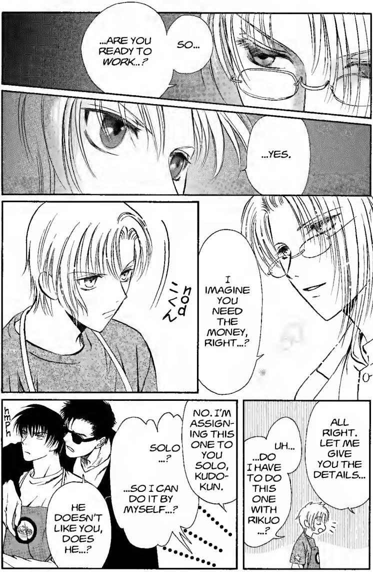

Ohto Private Girls' High School Graduation Ceremonies
Ohto Private Girls' High School Graduation Ceremonies
DRUG STAR
tle Princess

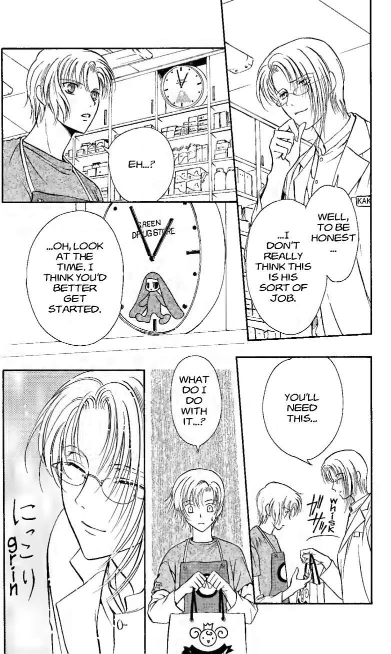

HEY, LOOK...!
WOW... HE'S SO *CUTE!*
Ohto Private Girls' High Schoo
HE'S THE PRETTIEST BOY I'VE EVER *SEEN!*
きゃあ Kyaa!
HE *MUST* BE SOMEBODY'S BOYFRIEND.
きゃあ Kyaa!
やだっ No way!
PROBABLY WAITING FOR HER TO COME OUT OF THE GRADUATION. I'M *SOOO* JEALOUS!
Look at him!
I wish he was waiting for me!
Ohto Priva Girls' High Schoo Graduati Ceremo

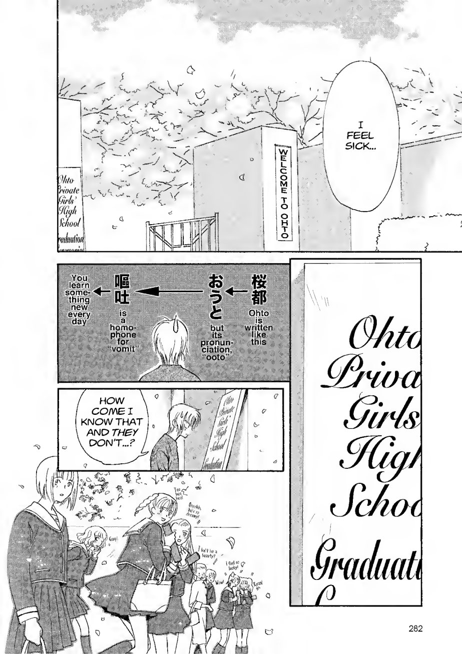

みどり薬局
WHAT? ARE WE READY TO WORK...?
みどり薬局
NOW IN MENTHOL!
leaves your pits MINTY FRESH
DEODORANT

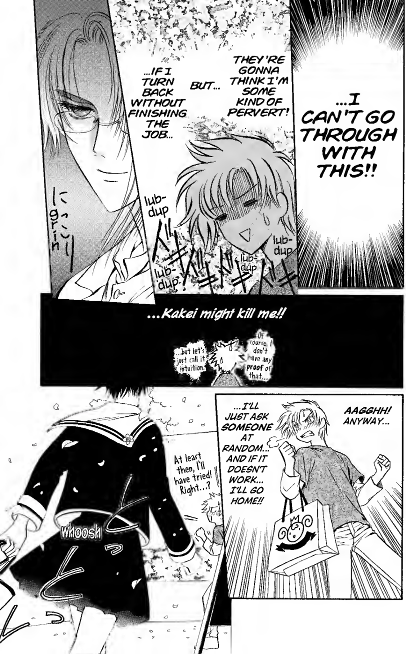

Uh, yeah! Of course! We're stocking the shelves, sir!
わた Fret
わた Fret
もくもく munch munch
YOU'RE SO FUNNY, KUDO-KUN.
くすくす giggle giggle
I MEANT THE *OTHER* SORT OF WORK, KUDO-KUN.
OH... THAT.
YES... THAT.
ぬっ slide
ぐいっ tug
STOCK *THIS*, YOU SEXY YOUNG THING.
ポイ drop
KYAAAAA!!
HAW! HAW!
WHA-WHA-WHA-WHA--
--WHAT DID YOU PUT DOWN *MY* SHIRT ...?!
Yes indeed.
HAW! HAW! HAW! HAW! Full of energy, ain't he?

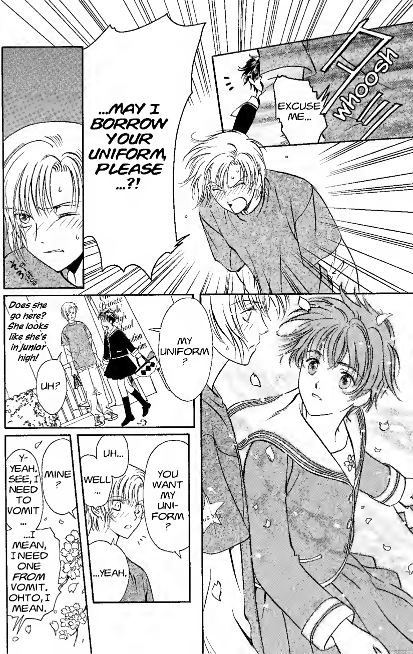

ganhh!
gahhhh!
reach
HEY...!
yank
plop
YOU BABY.
SHUT...
...SHUT UP!!
NOW, BOYS ...
...THAT'S ENOUGH AFFECTIONATE HORSEPLAY FOR THIS EVENING.
heh! heh! heh!
WE HAVE NO AFFECTION ...!

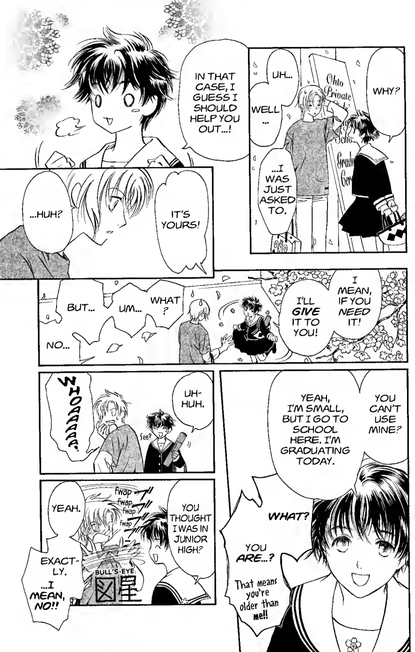

SO...
...ARE YOU READY TO WORK...?
...YES.
I IMAGINE YOU NEED THE MONEY, RIGHT...?
nod
ALL RIGHT. LET ME GIVE YOU THE DETAILS...
UH... ...DO I HAVE TO DO THIS ONE WITH RIKUO...?
NO. I'M ASSIGNING THIS ONE TO YOU SOLO, KUDO-KUN.
SOLO...?
...SO I CAN DO IT BY MYSELF...?
HE DOESN'T LIKE YOU, DOES HE...?
hmph

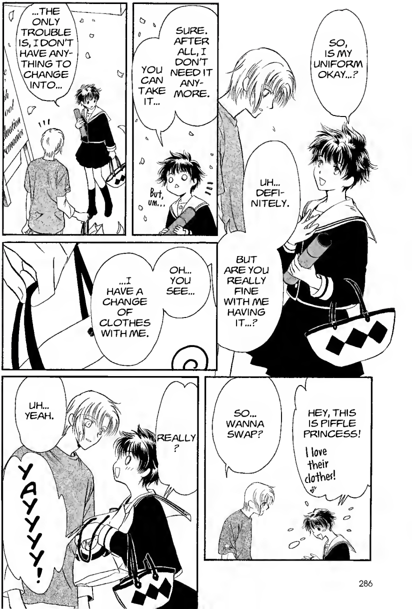

KAK
WELL, TO BE HONEST...
...I DON'T REALLY THINK THIS IS HIS SORT OF JOB.
EH...?
GREEN DRUG STORE
...OH, LOOK AT THE TIME. I THINK YOU'D BETTER GET STARTED.
YOU'LL NEED THIS...
ガサ whisk
WHAT DO I DO WITH IT...?
にっこり grin

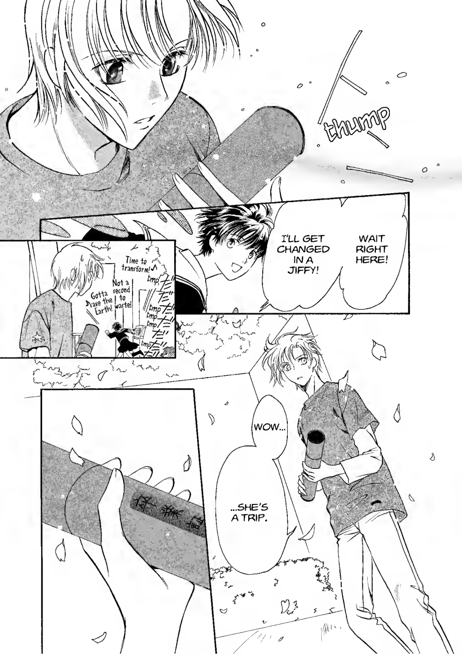

WELCOME TO OHTO
Ohto Private Girls' High School Graduation
I FEEL SICK...
Ohto Priva Girls High Schoo Graduati
桜都 Ohto is written like this
おうと but its pronunciation, "ooto"
嘔吐 is a homophone for "vomit"
You learn something new every day
HOW COME I KNOW THAT AND THEY DON'T...?
Ohto Private Girls' High School Graduation
Tee hee hee!
Ooohh, he's so dreamy!
Gasp!
Isn't he a beauty?
I feel so lucky!
Kyaa!
Wow!

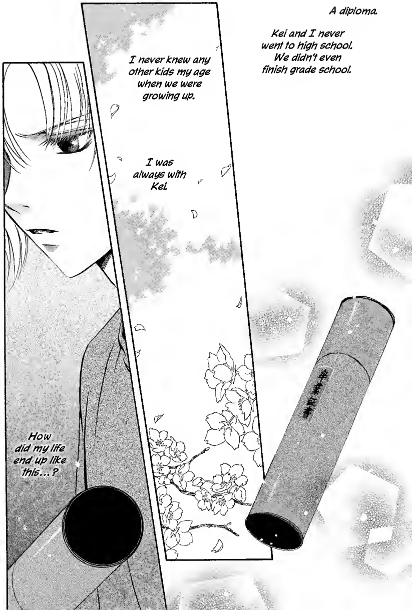

...I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS!!
THEY'RE GONNA THINK I'M SOME KIND OF PERVERT!
BUT...
...IF I TURN BACK WITHOUT FINISHING THE JOB...
lub-dup lub-dup lub-dup lub-dup
にっこり
grin
...Kakei might kill me!!
Of course I don't have any proof of that...
...but let's just call it intuition.
AAGGHH! ANYWAY...
...I'LL JUST ASK SOMEONE AT RANDOM... AND IF IT DOESN'T WORK... I'LL GO HOME!!
At least then, I'll have tried! Right...?
whoosh

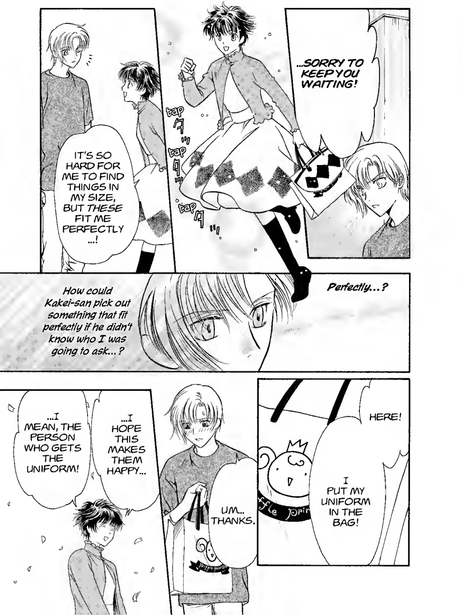

WHOOSH
EXCUSE ME...
...MAY I BORROW YOUR UNIFORM, PLEASE ...?!
MY UNIFORM?
UH?
Does she go here? She looks like she's in junior high!
Private Girls' High School
YOU WANT MY UNIFORM?
UH... WELL...
...YEAH.
MINE?
Y-YEAH. SEE, I NEED TO VOMIT... ...I MEAN, I NEED ONE FROM VOMIT. OHTO, I MEAN.

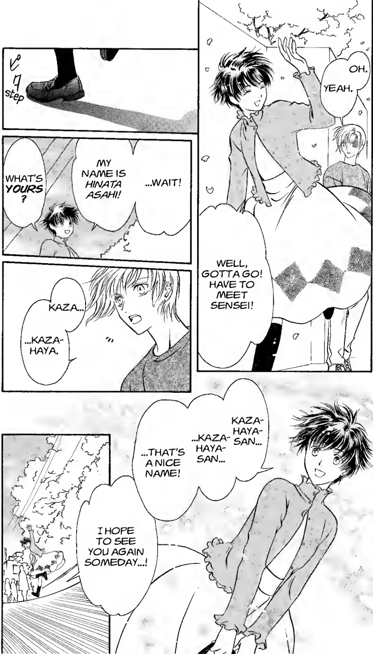

WHY?
UH... WELL...
Ohto Private
...I WAS JUST ASKED TO.
IN THAT CASE, I GUESS I SHOULD HELP YOU OUT...!
IT'S YOURS!
...HUH?
I MEAN, IF YOU *NEED* IT!
I'LL ***GIVE*** IT TO YOU!
WHAT?
UM...
BUT...
NO...
YOU CAN'T USE MINE?
YEAH, I'M SMALL, BUT I GO TO SCHOOL HERE. I'M GRADUATING TODAY.
WHAT?
YOU ***ARE...?***
That means you're older than **me!!**
UH-HUH.
See?
WHOAAAAA!
YOU THOUGHT I WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH?
YEAH.
fwap fwap fwap fwap
EXACTLY. ...I *MEAN,* ***NO!!***
BULL'S-EYE
図星

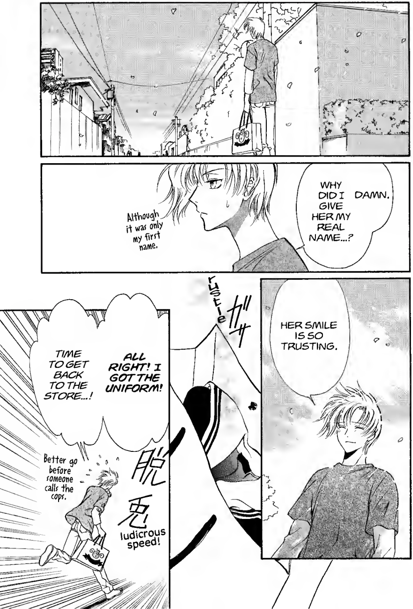

SO, IS MY UNIFORM OKAY...?
UH... DEFINITELY.
BUT ARE YOU REALLY FINE WITH ME HAVING IT...?
SURE. AFTER ALL, I DON'T NEED IT ANYMORE.
YOU CAN TAKE IT...
But, um...
...THE ONLY TROUBLE IS, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO CHANGE INTO...
OH... YOU SEE...
...I HAVE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES WITH ME.
HEY, THIS IS PIFFLE PRINCESS!
I love their clothes!
SO... WANNA SWAP?
REALLY?
UH... YEAH.
YAYYYY!

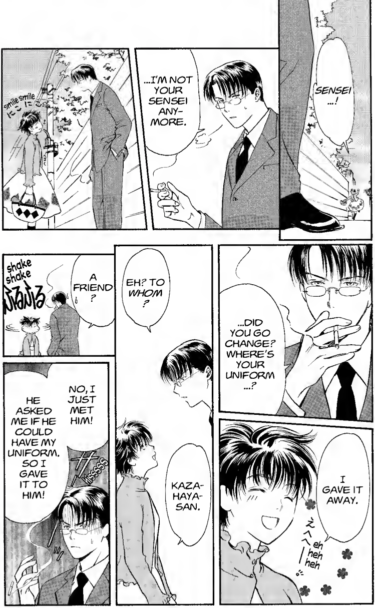

thump
WAIT RIGHT HERE!
I'LL GET CHANGED IN A JIFFY!
Time to transform!♪
Not a second to waste!
Gotta save the Earth!
tmp tmp tmp tmp tmp
WOW...
...SHE'S A TRIP.

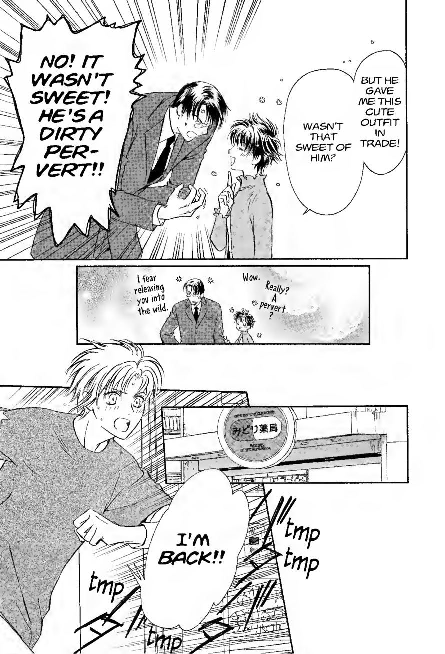

A diploma.
Kei and I never went to high school. We didn't even finish grade school.
卒業証書
I never knew any other kids my age when we were growing up.
I was always with Kei.
How did my life end up like this...?

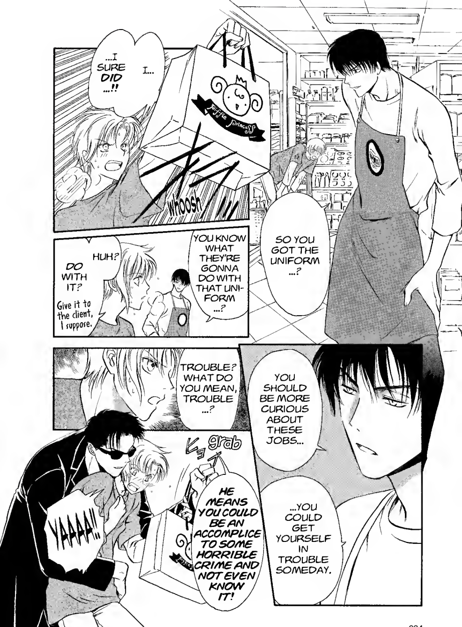

...SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!
tap
tap
tap
IT'S SO HARD FOR ME TO FIND THINGS IN MY SIZE, BUT *THESE* FIT ME PERFECTLY ...!
Perfectly...?
How could Kakei-san pick out something that fit perfectly if he didn't know who I was going to ask...?
HERE!
I PUT MY UNIFORM IN THE BAG!
UM... THANKS.
...I HOPE THIS MAKES THEM HAPPY...
...I MEAN, THE PERSON WHO GETS THE UNIFORM!

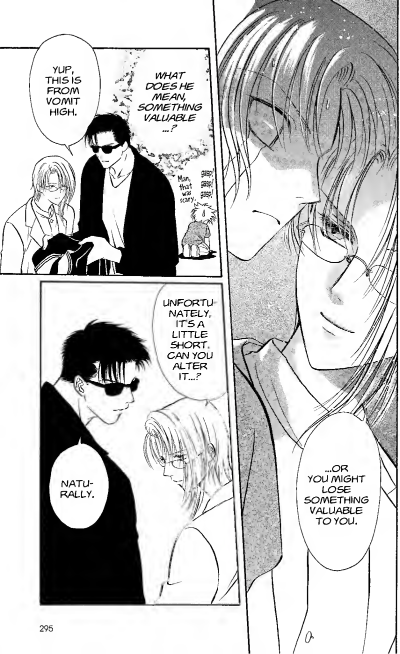

OH. YEAH.
WELL, GOTTA GO! HAVE TO MEET SENSEI!
step
...WAIT!
MY NAME IS *HINATA ASAHI!*
WHAT'S ***YOURS?***
KAZA...
...KAZA-HAYA.
KAZA-HAYA-SAN...
...KAZA-HAYA-SAN...
...THAT'S A NICE NAME!
I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOMEDAY...!

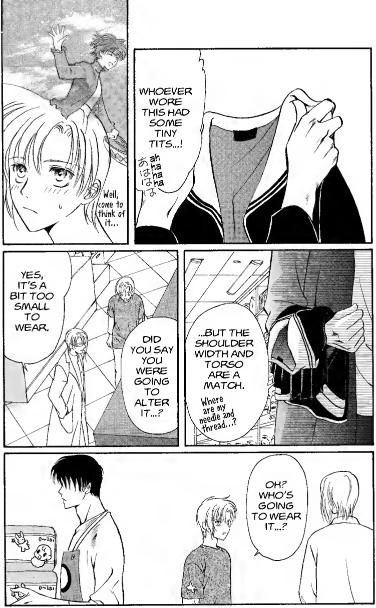

DAMN.
WHY DID I GIVE HER MY REAL NAME...?
Although it was only my first name.
HER SMILE IS SO TRUSTING.
rustle ガサ
ALL RIGHT! I GOT THE UNIFORM!
TIME TO GET BACK TO THE STORE...!
Better go before someone calls the cops.
脱兎
ludicrous speed!

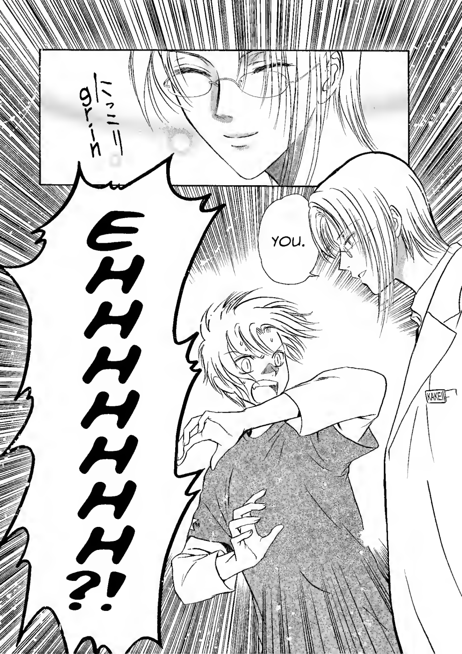

SENSEI ...!
...I'M NOT YOUR SENSEI ANYMORE.
smile smile
にこにこ
...DID YOU GO CHANGE? WHERE'S YOUR UNIFORM ...?
I GAVE IT AWAY.
えへへ
eh heh heh
EH? TO WHOM?
KAZAHAYA-SAN.
A FRIEND?
shake shake
ふるふる
NO, I JUST MET HIM!
HE ASKED ME IF HE COULD HAVE MY UNIFORM. SO I GAVE IT TO HIM!
hissss


BUT HE GAVE ME THIS CUTE OUTFIT IN TRADE!
WASN'T THAT SWEET OF HIM?
NO! IT WASN'T SWEET! HE'S A DIRTY PERVERT!!
Wow. Really? A pervert?
I fear releasing you into the wild.
みどり薬局
tmp tmp
I'M BACK!!
tmp
tmp


SO YOU GOT THE UNIFORM ...?
I...
...I SURE DID ...!!
Puffle Princess
whoosh
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE GONNA DO WITH THAT UNIFORM ...?
HUH? DO WITH IT?
Give it to the client, I suppose.
YOU SHOULD BE MORE CURIOUS ABOUT THESE JOBS...
...YOU COULD GET YOURSELF IN TROUBLE SOMEDAY.
TROUBLE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, TROUBLE ...?
ヒョイ
grab
HE MEANS YOU COULD BE AN ACCOMPLICE TO SOME HORRIBLE CRIME AND NOT EVEN KNOW IT!
YAAAA!!


...OR YOU MIGHT LOSE SOMETHING VALUABLE TO YOU.
WHAT DOES HE MEAN, SOMETHING VALUABLE ...?
gasp! gasp! gasp!
Man, that was scary.
YUP, THIS IS FROM VOMIT HIGH.
UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S A LITTLE SHORT. CAN YOU ALTER IT...?
NATURALLY.


WHOEVER WORE THIS HAD SOME TINY TITS...!
あははは ah ha ha ha
Well, come to think of it...
DID YOU SAY YOU WERE GOING TO ALTER IT...?
YES, IT'S A BIT TOO SMALL TO WEAR.
...BUT THE SHOULDER WIDTH AND TORSO ARE A MATCH.
Where are my needle and thread...?
OH? WHO'S GOING TO WEAR IT...?


にっこり
grin
YOU.
EHHHHHHHH?!
KAKEI

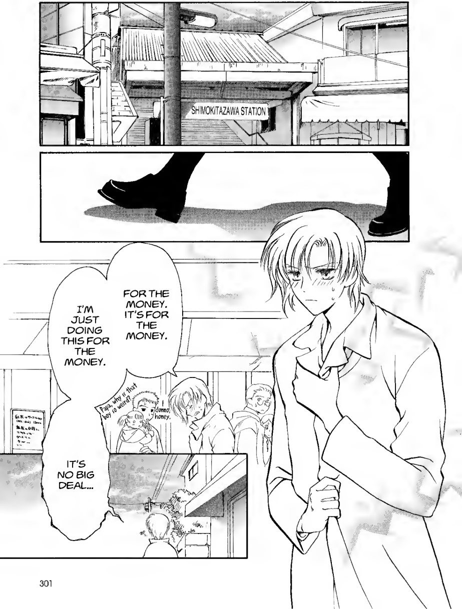
LEGAL DRUG

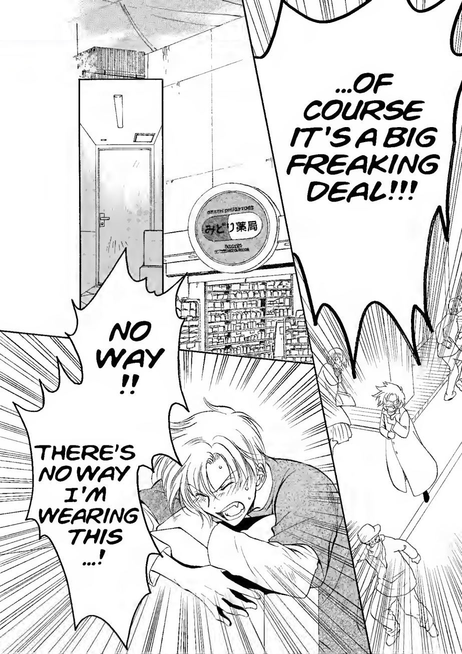
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局

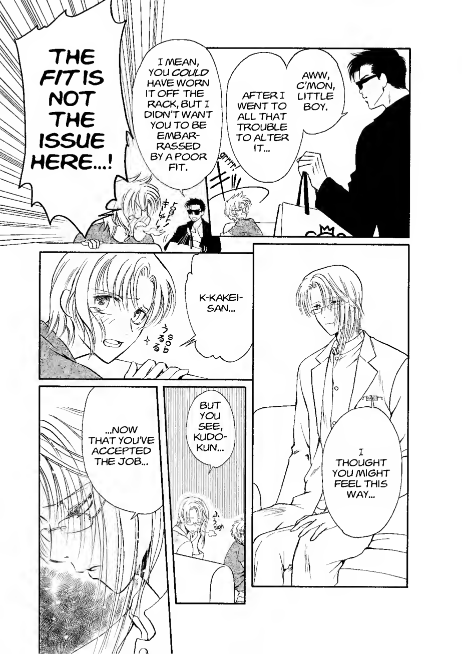
lawful drug
lawful drug

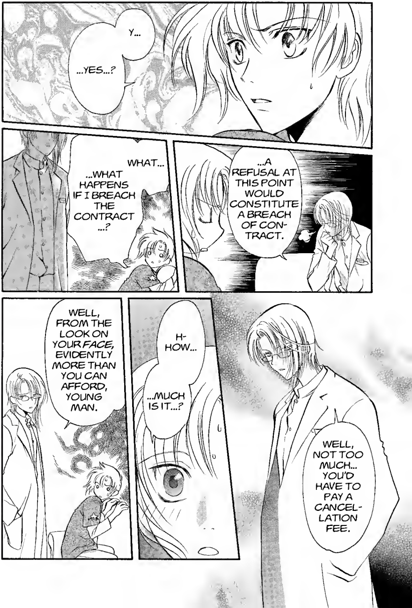
DRUG NO.10

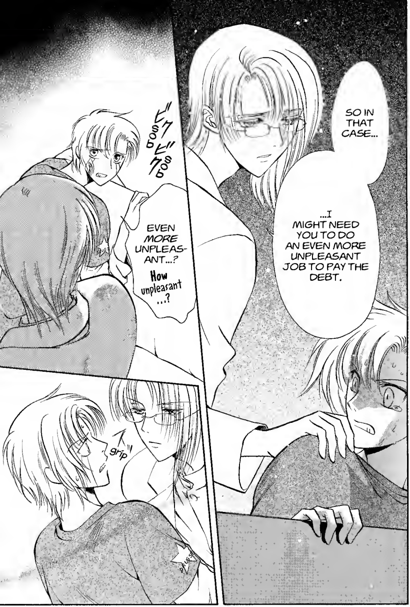
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

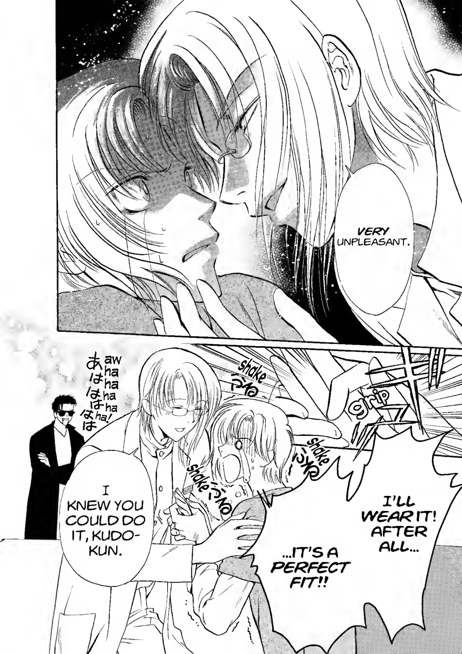

SHIMOKITAZAWA STATION
FOR THE MONEY. IT'S FOR THE MONEY.
I'M JUST DOING THIS FOR THE MONEY.
Papa, why is that boy so weird?
I dunno, honey.
IT'S NO BIG DEAL...

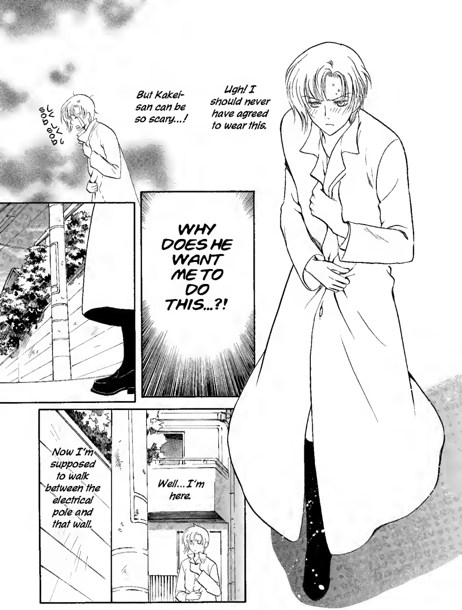

...OF COURSE IT'S A BIG FREAKING DEAL!!!
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
NO WAY !!
THERE'S NO WAY I'M WEARING THIS ...!

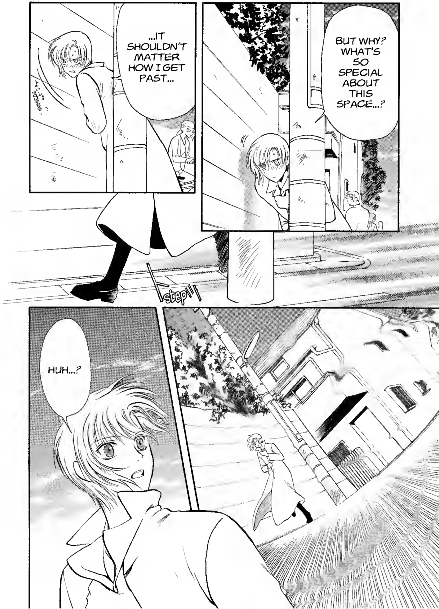

AWW, C'MON, LITTLE BOY.
AFTER I WENT TO ALL THAT TROUBLE TO ALTER IT...
grrrr!
キ!!
I MEAN, YOU *COULD* HAVE WORN IT OFF THE RACK, BUT I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BE EMBARRASSED BY A POOR FIT.
キーッ!
roar!
***THE FIT* IS NOT THE ISSUE HERE...!**
K-KAKEI-SAN...
うるるる
sob
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT FEEL THIS WAY...
BUT YOU SEE, KUDO-KUN...
ふう
sigh
...NOW THAT YOU'VE ACCEPTED THE JOB...

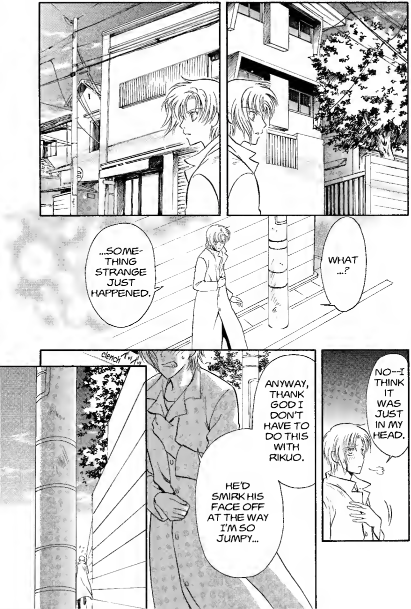

Y...
...YES...?
...A REFUSAL AT THIS POINT WOULD CONSTITUTE A BREACH OF CONTRACT.
WHAT... ...WHAT HAPPENS IF I BREACH THE CONTRACT ...?
WELL, NOT TOO MUCH... YOU'D HAVE TO PAY A CANCELLATION FEE.
H-HOW...
...MUCH IS IT...?
WELL, FROM THE LOOK ON YOUR *FACE*, EVIDENTLY MORE THAN YOU CAN AFFORD, YOUNG MAN.

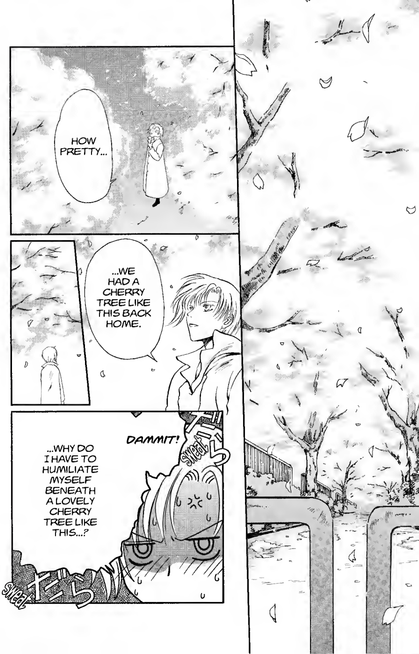

SO IN THAT CASE...
...I MIGHT NEED YOU TO DO AN EVEN MORE UNPLEASANT JOB TO PAY THE DEBT.
ビク ビク
sob sob
EVEN *MORE* UNPLEASANT...?
How unpleasant ...?
grip

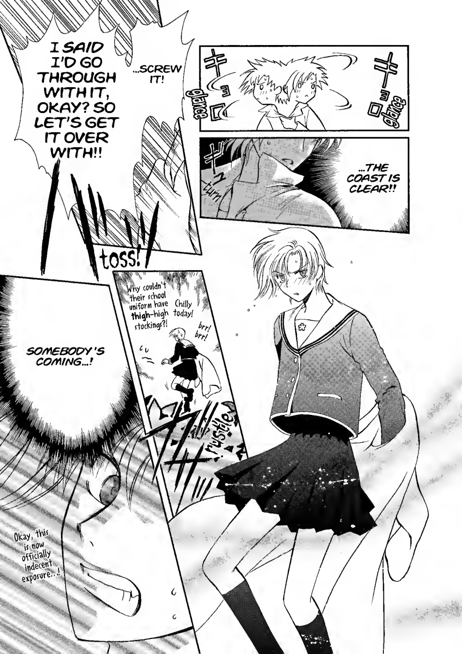

VERY UNPLEASANT.
grip
shake ぶる
I'LL WEAR IT! AFTER ALL...
...IT'S A PERFECT FIT!!
shake ぶる
shake ぶる
I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT, KUDO-KUN.
あははははは
aw ha ha ha ha ha!

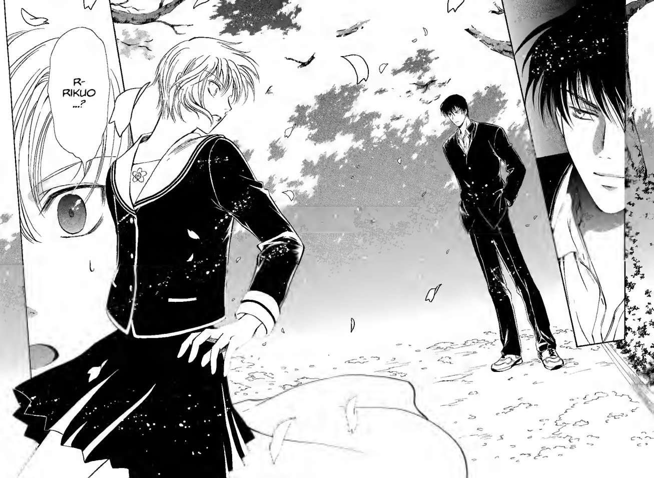

Ugh! I should never have agreed to wear this.
But Kakei-san can be so scary...!
しくしく
SOB SOB
WHY DOES HE WANT ME TO DO THIS...?!
Well... I'm here.
Now I'm supposed to walk between the electrical pole and that wall.

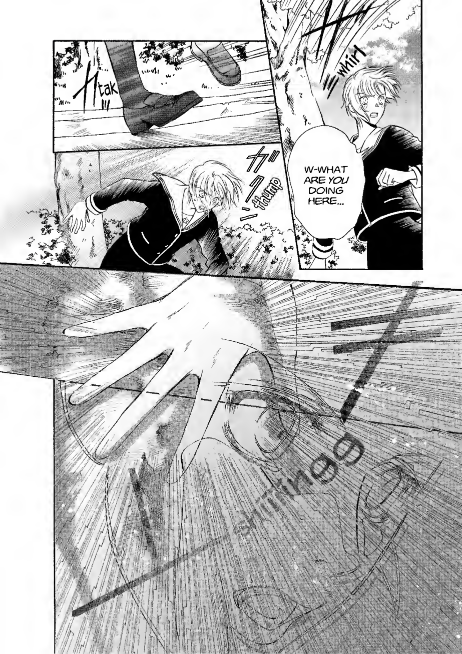

BUT WHY? WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS SPACE...?
...IT SHOULDN'T MATTER HOW I GET PAST...
よいしょ squeeze.
step!!
HUH...?

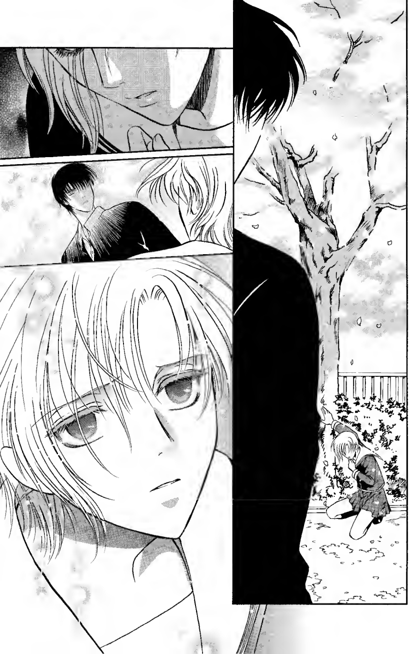

WHAT ...?
...SOMETHING STRANGE JUST HAPPENED.
NO--I THINK IT WAS JUST IN MY HEAD.
ANYWAY, THANK GOD I DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS WITH RIKUO.
clench
HE'D SMIRK HIS FACE OFF AT THE WAY I'M SO JUMPY...

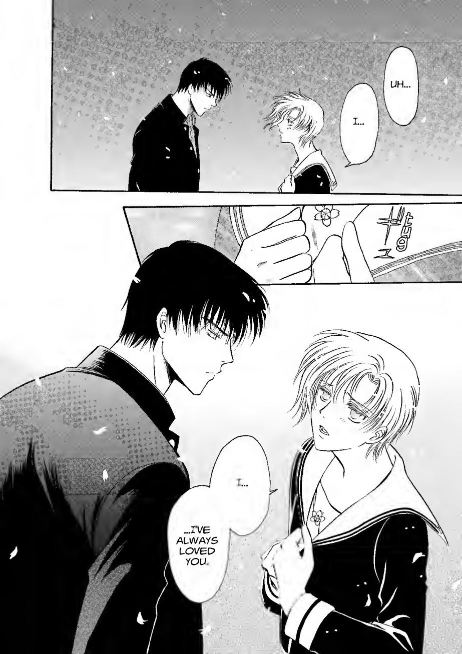

HOW PRETTY...
...WE HAD A CHERRY TREE LIKE THIS BACK HOME.
DAMMIT!
sweat
...WHY DO I HAVE TO HUMILIATE MYSELF BENEATH A LOVELY CHERRY TREE LIKE THIS...?
sweat

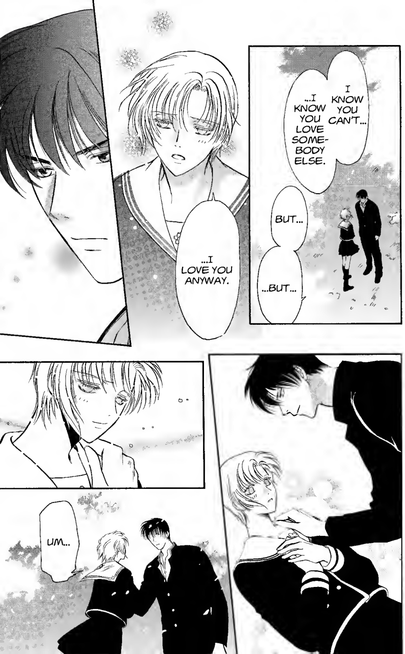

glance
glance
...THE COAST IS CLEAR!!
turn
...SCREW IT!
I SAID I'D GO THROUGH WITH IT, OKAY? SO LET'S GET IT OVER WITH!!
toss!
Chilly today!
Why couldn't their school uniform have **thigh**-high stockings?!
brr! brr!
rustle
SOMEBODY'S COMING...!
Okay, this is now officially indecent exposure...!

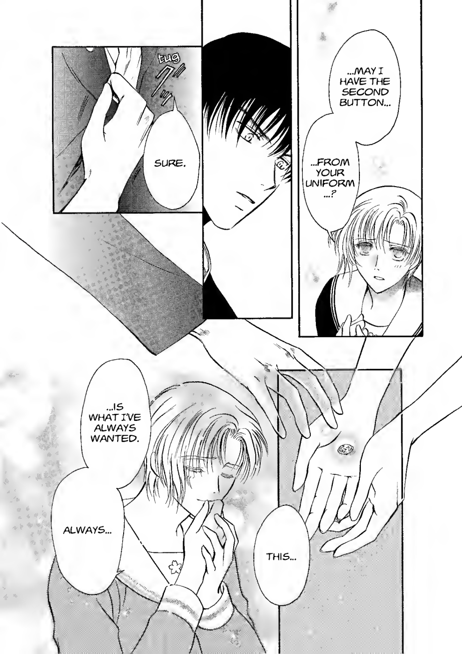

R-RIKUO ...?

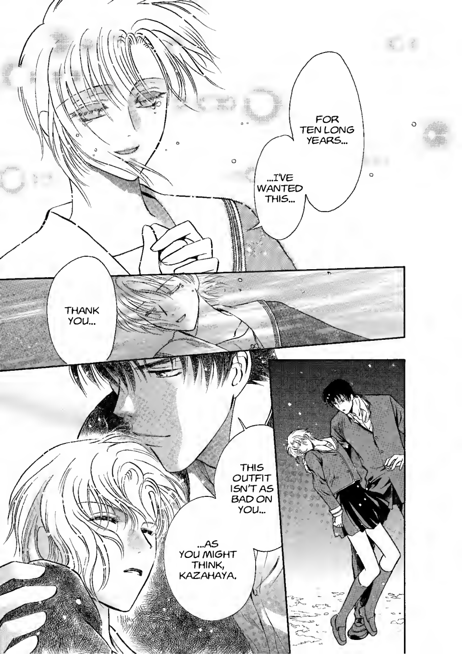

whirl
W-WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE...
tak
thump
shingg

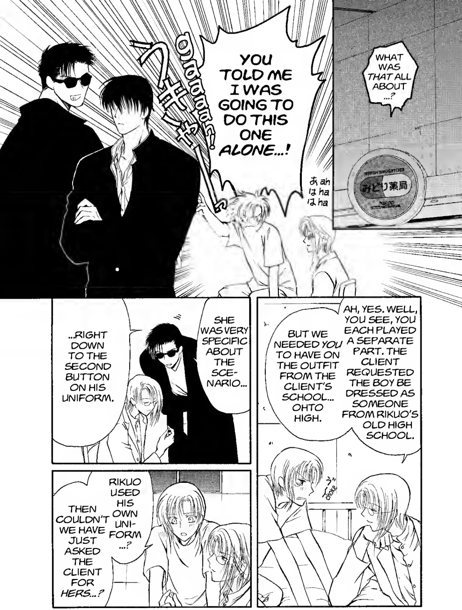


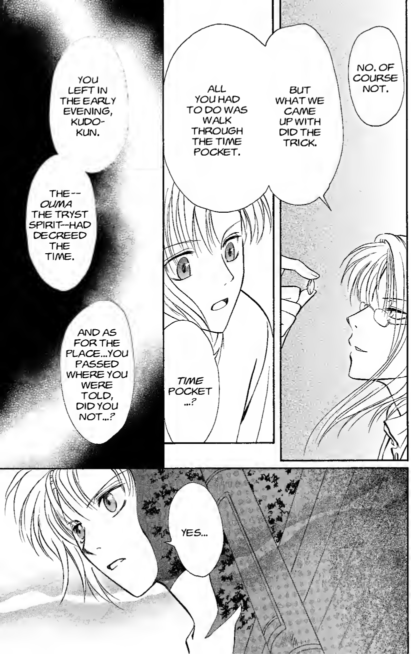

UH...
I...
tug
I...
...I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU.

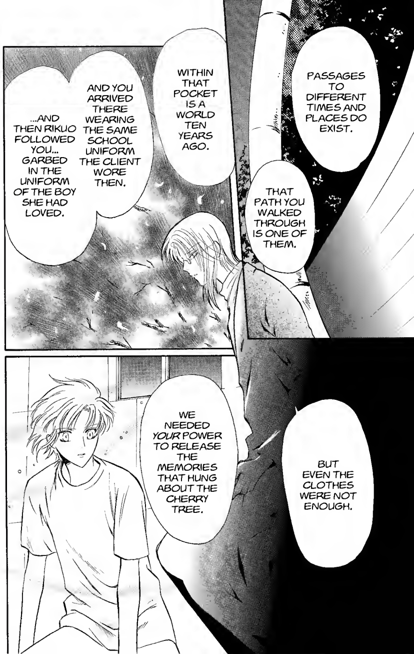

I KNOW YOU CAN'T...
...I KNOW YOU LOVE SOMEBODY ELSE.
BUT...
...BUT...
...I LOVE YOU ANYWAY.
UM...

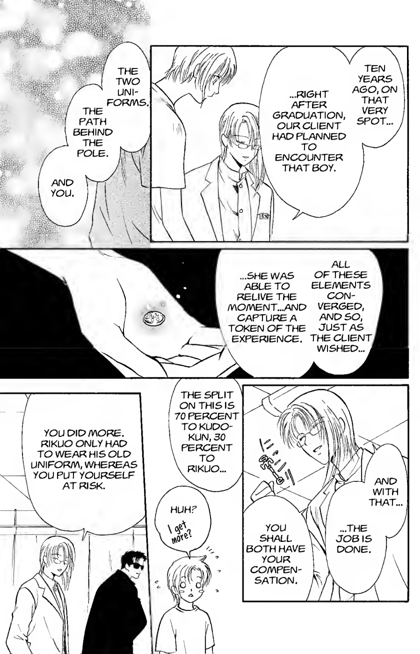

...MAY I HAVE THE SECOND BUTTON...
...FROM YOUR UNIFORM ...?
tug
SURE.
THIS...
...IS WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED.
ALWAYS...

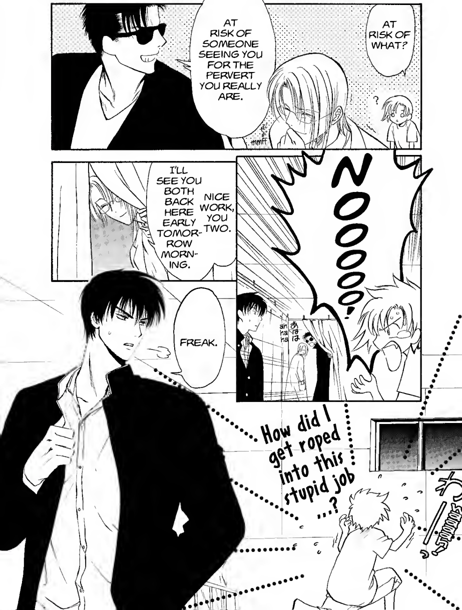

FOR TEN LONG YEARS...
...I'VE WANTED THIS...
THANK YOU...
THIS OUTFIT ISN'T AS BAD ON YOU...
...AS YOU MIGHT THINK, KAZAHAYA.

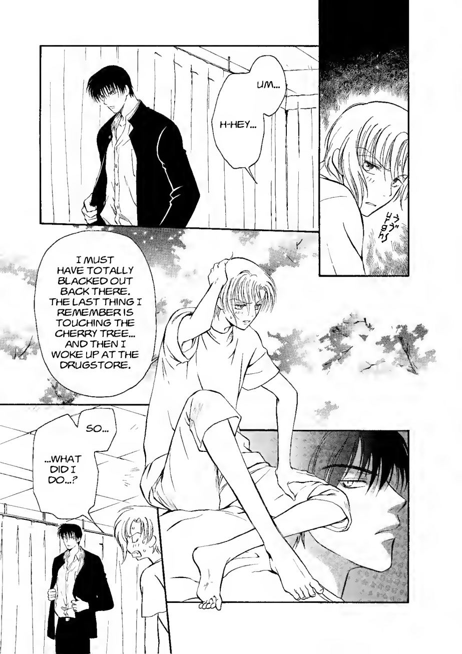

WHAT WAS *THAT* ALL ABOUT ...?
みどり薬局
あ ah は ha は ha
YOU TOLD ME I WAS GOING TO DO THIS ONE *ALONE*...!
ヘキャー
gaaaaaah!
AH, YES. WELL, YOU SEE, YOU EACH PLAYED A SEPARATE PART. THE CLIENT REQUESTED THE BOY BE DRESSED AS SOMEONE FROM RIKUO'S OLD HIGH SCHOOL.
BUT WE NEEDED *YOU* TO HAVE ON THE OUTFIT FROM THE CLIENT'S SCHOOL... OHTO HIGH.
SHE WAS VERY SPECIFIC ABOUT THE SCENARIO...
...RIGHT DOWN TO THE SECOND BUTTON ON HIS UNIFORM.
チョ choke
RIKUO USED HIS OWN UNIFORM ...?
THEN COULDN'T WE HAVE JUST ASKED THE CLIENT FOR *HERS*...?

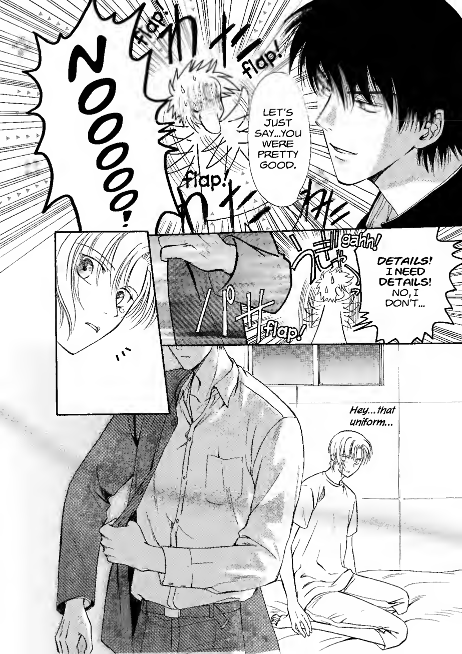

NO. OF COURSE NOT.
BUT WHAT WE CAME UP WITH DID THE TRICK.
ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS WALK THROUGH THE TIME POCKET.
TIME POCKET ...?
YOU LEFT IN THE EARLY EVENING, KUDO-KUN.
THE-- *OUMA* THE TRYST SPIRIT--HAD DECREED THE TIME.
AND AS FOR THE PLACE...YOU PASSED WHERE YOU WERE TOLD, DID YOU NOT...?
YES...

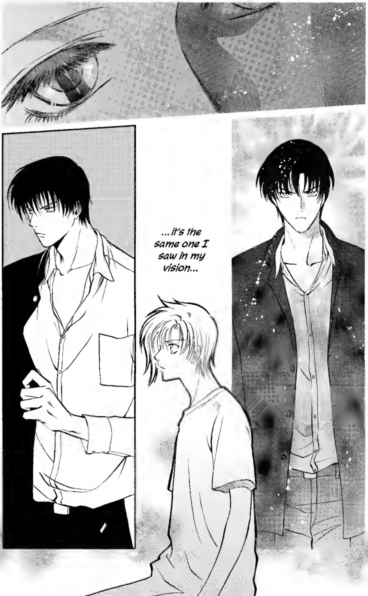

PASSAGES TO DIFFERENT TIMES AND PLACES DO EXIST.
THAT PATH YOU WALKED THROUGH IS ONE OF THEM.
WITHIN THAT POCKET IS A WORLD TEN YEARS AGO.
AND YOU ARRIVED THERE WEARING THE SAME SCHOOL UNIFORM THE CLIENT WORE THEN.
...AND THEN RIKUO FOLLOWED YOU... GARBED IN THE UNIFORM OF THE BOY SHE HAD LOVED.
BUT EVEN THE CLOTHES WERE NOT ENOUGH.
WE NEEDED *YOUR* POWER TO RELEASE THE MEMORIES THAT HUNG ABOUT THE CHERRY TREE.

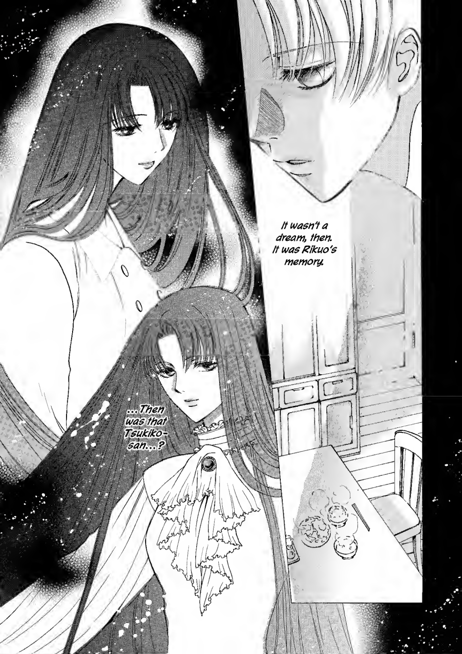

TEN YEARS AGO, ON THAT VERY SPOT...
...RIGHT AFTER GRADUATION, OUR CLIENT HAD PLANNED TO ENCOUNTER THAT BOY.
THE TWO UNIFORMS.
THE PATH BEHIND THE POLE.
AND YOU.
ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS CONVERGED, AND SO, JUST AS THE CLIENT WISHED...
...SHE WAS ABLE TO RELIVE THE MOMENT...AND CAPTURE A TOKEN OF THE EXPERIENCE.
AND WITH THAT...
...THE JOB IS DONE.
YOU SHALL BOTH HAVE YOUR COMPENSATION.
THE SPLIT ON THIS IS 70 PERCENT TO KUDO-KUN, 30 PERCENT TO RIKUO...
HUH?
I get more?
YOU DID MORE. RIKUO ONLY HAD TO WEAR HIS OLD UNIFORM, WHEREAS YOU PUT YOURSELF AT RISK.

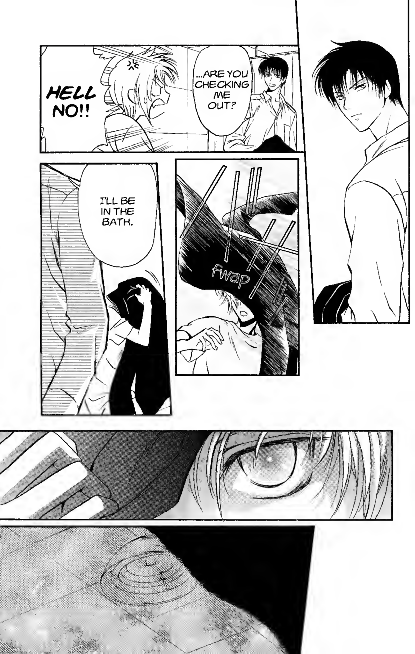

AT RISK OF SOMEONE SEEING YOU FOR THE PERVERT YOU REALLY ARE.
mmff
AT RISK OF WHAT?
?
I'LL SEE YOU BOTH BACK HERE EARLY TOMORROW MORNING.
NICE WORK, YOU TWO.
NOOOOOO!
ah ha ha
あはは
FREAK.
How did I get roped into this stupid job ...?
わーっ

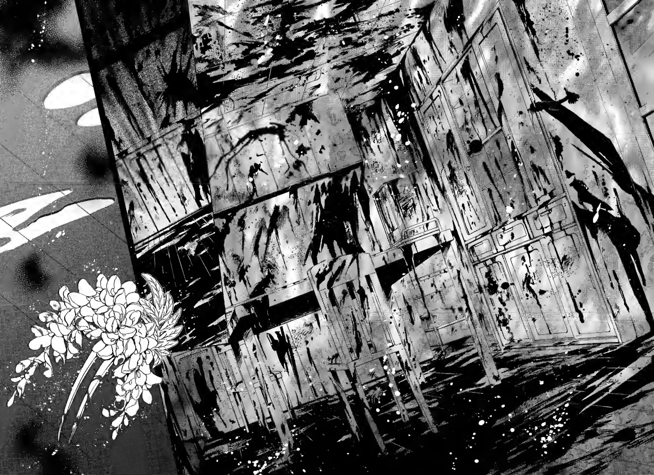

うゔ
UGH
UM... H-HEY...
I MUST HAVE TOTALLY BLACKED OUT BACK THERE. THE LAST THING I REMEMBER IS TOUCHING THE CHERRY TREE... AND THEN I WOKE UP AT THE DRUGSTORE.
SO... ...WHAT DID I DO...?

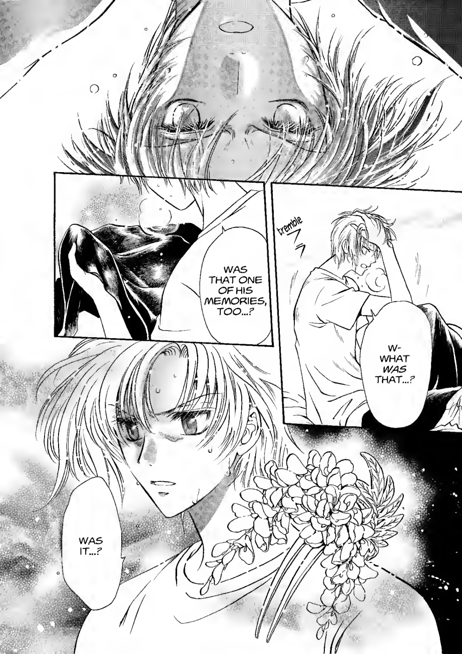

LET'S JUST SAY...YOU WERE PRETTY GOOD.
flap!
flap!
flap!
NOOOOOO!
DETAILS! I NEED DETAILS! NO, I DON'T...
gahh!
flap!
Hey...that uniform...


...it's the same one I saw in my vision...


It wasn't a dream, then. It was Rikuo's memory.
...Then was that Tsukiko-san...?


...ARE YOU CHECKING ME OUT?
HELL NO!!
fwap
I'LL BE IN THE BATH.

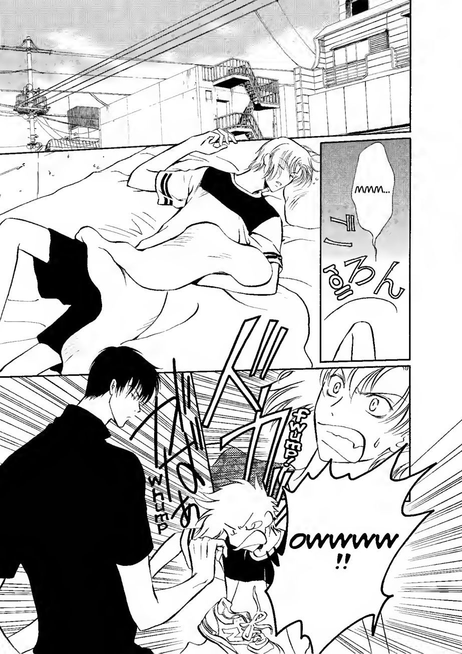


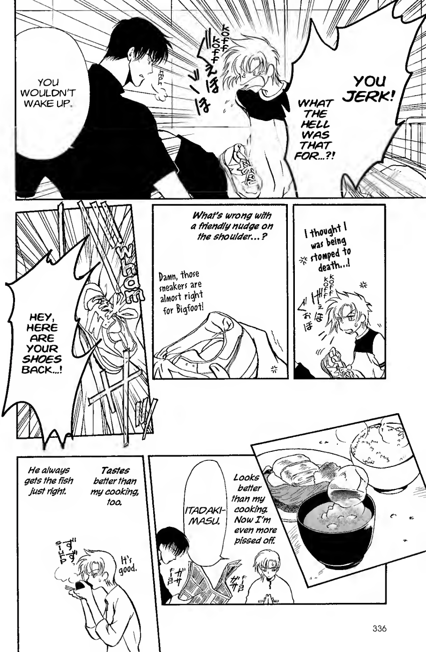

tremble
W-WHAT *WAS* THAT...?
WAS THAT ONE OF HIS MEMORIES, TOO...?
WAS IT...?

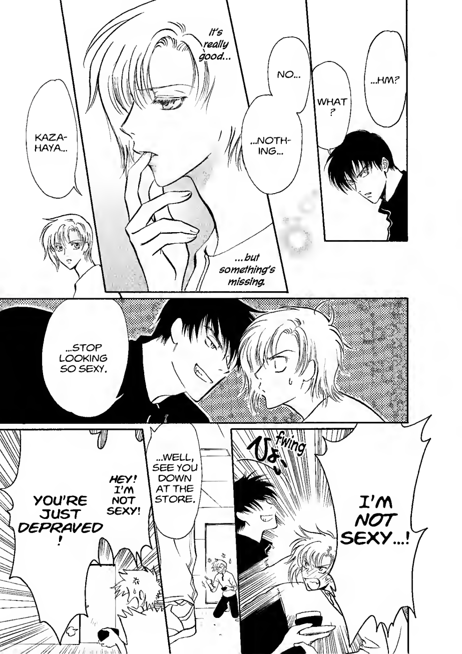
LEGAL DRUG

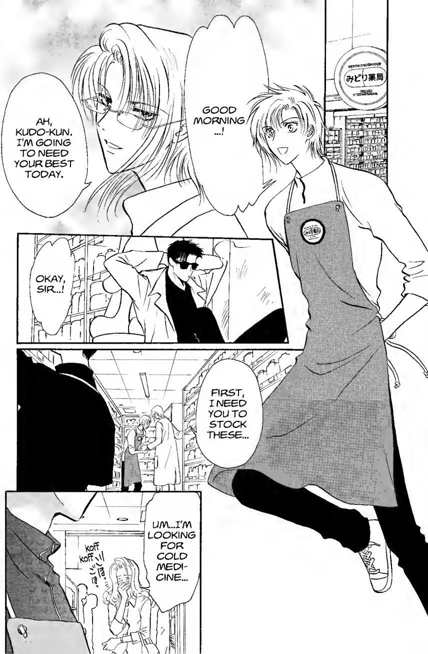
DRUG EXTRA

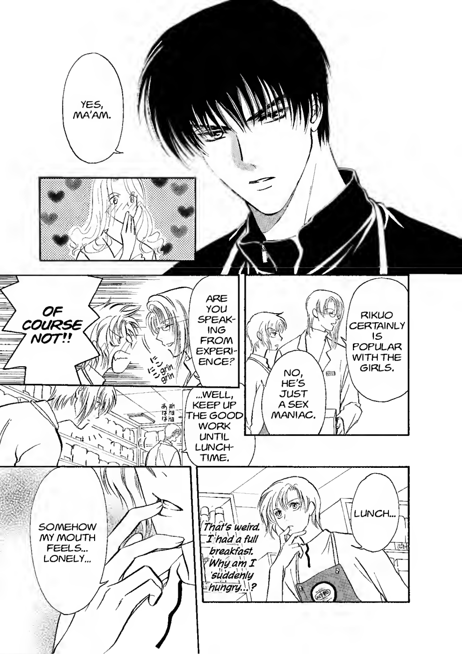
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

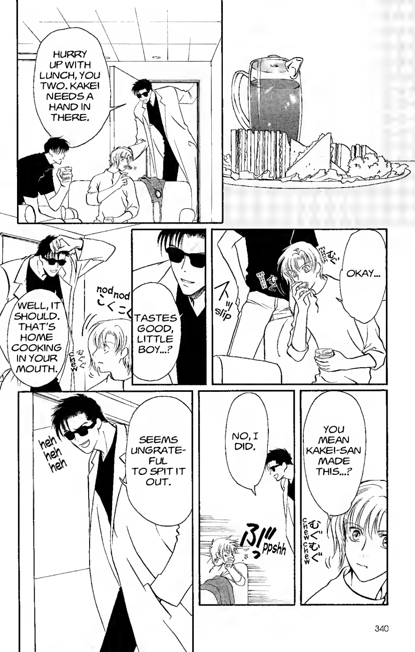

mmm...
ごーろん
roll
ドガッ
fwump!
whump
owwww!!

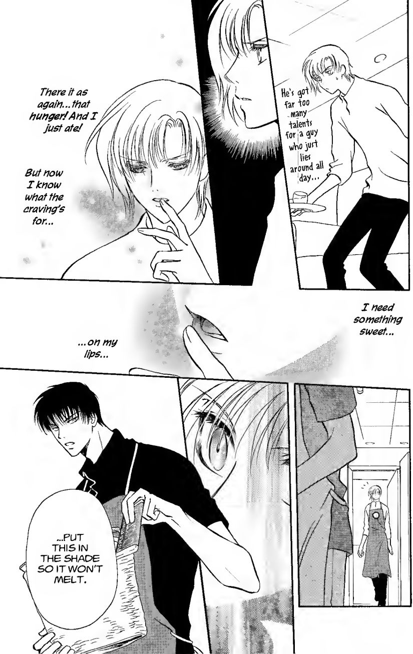

YOU JERK!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT FOR...?!
KOFF KOFF
えほ ゲほ
HMPH!
YOU WOULDN'T WAKE UP.
I thought I was being stomped to death...!
KOFF KOFF
げほ おほ
What's wrong with a friendly nudge on the shoulder...?
Damn, those sneakers are almost right for Bigfoot!
HEY, HERE ARE YOUR SHOES BACK...!
WHAM
ITADAKI-MASU.
Looks better than my cooking. Now I'm even more pissed off.
FLIP
ガサ
He always gets the fish just right.
Tastes better than my cooking, too.
SLURP
ずず
It's good.

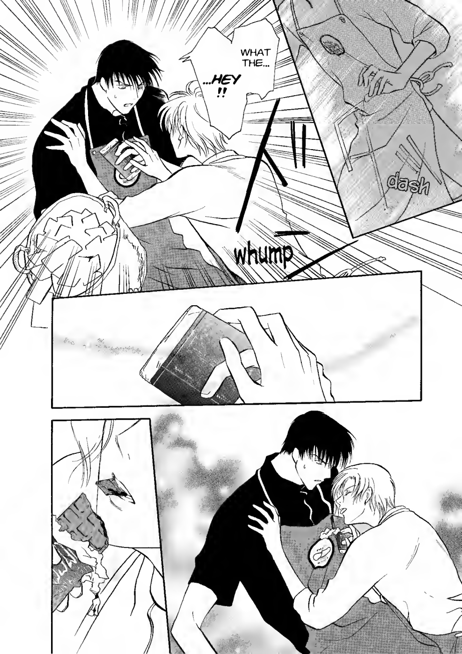

...HM?
WHAT?
NO...
...NOTHING...
It's really good...
...but something's missing.
KAZAHAYA...
...STOP LOOKING SO SEXY.
fwing
ひょい
I'M NOT SEXY...!
...WELL, SEE YOU DOWN AT THE STORE.
HEY! I'M NOT SEXY!
YOU'RE JUST DEPRAVED!

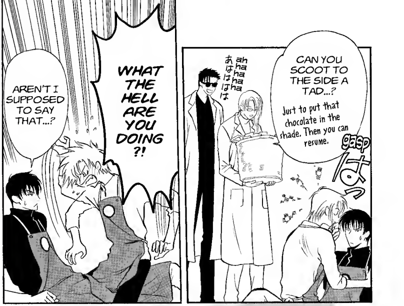

GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
GOOD MORNING...!
AH, KUDO-KUN. I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR BEST TODAY.
OKAY, SIR...!
FIRST, I NEED YOU TO STOCK THESE...
UM...I'M LOOKING FOR COLD MEDICINE...
koff koff

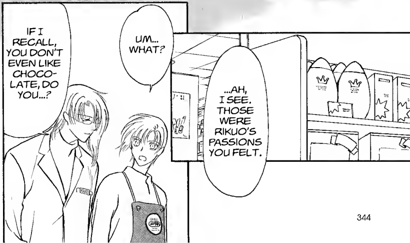

YES, MA'AM.
RIKUO CERTAINLY IS POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS.
NO, HE'S JUST A SEX MANIAC.
ARE YOU SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE?
OF COURSE NOT!!
にこにこ grin grin
あはは ah ha ha
...WELL, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK UNTIL LUNCHTIME.
LUNCH...
That's weird. I had a full breakfast. Why am I suddenly hungry...?
SOMEHOW MY MOUTH FEELS... LONELY...

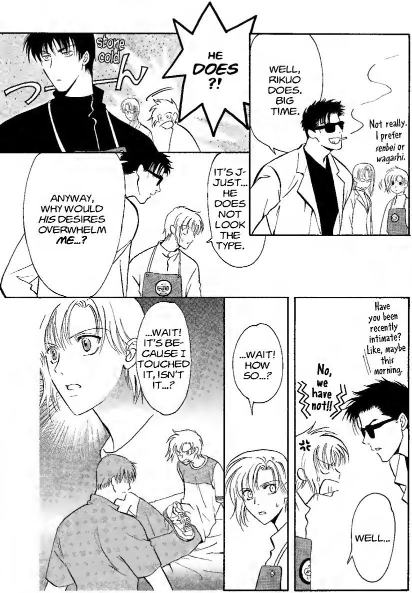

HURRY UP WITH LUNCH, YOU TWO. KAKEI NEEDS A HAND IN THERE.
むぐ munch
むぐ munch
OKAY...
へ slip
TASTES GOOD, LITTLE BOY...?
nod nod こくこく
むぐむぐ chew
WELL, IT SHOULD. THAT'S HOME COOKING IN YOUR MOUTH.
YOU MEAN KAKEI-SAN MADE THIS...?
むぐむぐ chew chew
NO, I DID.
ぶ!! ppshh
SEEMS UNGRATEFUL TO SPIT IT OUT.
heh heh heh

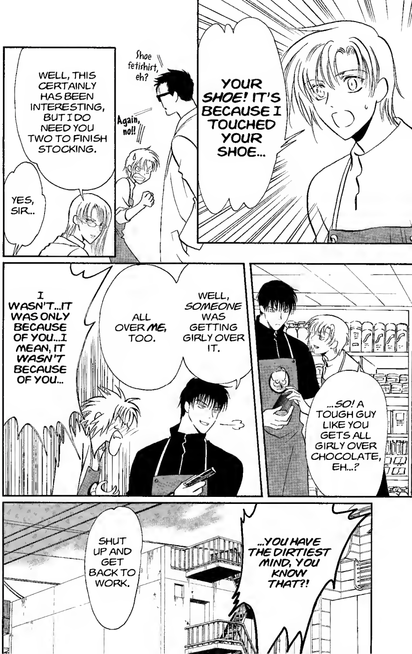

He's got far too many talents for a guy who just lies around all day...
There it as again...that hunger! And I just ate!
But now I know what the craving's for...
I need something sweet...
...on my lips...
...PUT THIS IN THE SHADE SO IT WON'T MELT.


dash
WHAT THE... ...HEY !!
whump


あははは ah ha ha ha
CAN YOU SCOOT TO THE SIDE A TAD...?
Just to put that chocolate in the shade. Then you can resume.
gasp はっ
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!
AREN'T I SUPPOSED TO SAY THAT...?


...AH, I SEE. THOSE WERE RIKUO'S PASSIONS YOU FELT.
UM... WHAT?
IF I RECALL, YOU DON'T EVEN LIKE CHOCOLATE, DO YOU...?

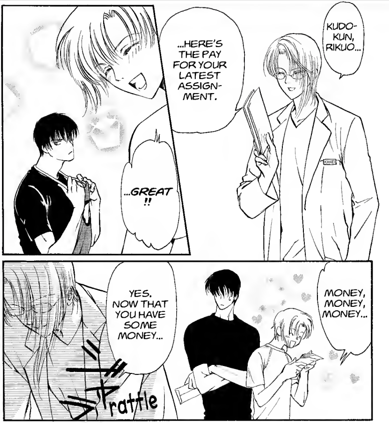

WELL, RIKUO DOES. BIG TIME.
Not really, I prefer *senbei* or *wagashi.*
HE **DOES**?!
stone cold
つーん
IT'S J-JUST... HE DOES NOT LOOK THE TYPE.
ANYWAY, WHY WOULD *HIS* DESIRES OVERWHELM ***ME***...?
Have you been recently intimate? Like, maybe this morning.
No, we have not!!
WELL...
...WAIT! HOW SO...?
...WAIT! IT'S BECAUSE I TOUCHED IT, ISN'T IT...?

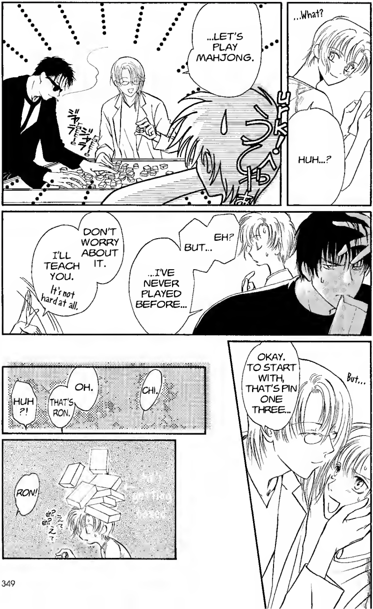

YOUR *SHOE!* IT'S BECAUSE I TOUCHED YOUR SHOE...
Shoe fetishist, eh?
Again, no!!
WELL, THIS CERTAINLY HAS BEEN INTERESTING, BUT I DO NEED YOU TWO TO FINISH STOCKING.
YES, SIR...
...*SO!* A TOUGH GUY LIKE YOU GETS ALL GIRLY OVER CHOCOLATE, EH...?
WELL, *SOMEONE* WAS GETTING GIRLY OVER IT.
ALL OVER *ME*, TOO.
I WASN'T...IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE OF YOU...I MEAN, IT *WASN'T* BECAUSE OF YOU...
...YOU HAVE THE DIRTIEST MIND, YOU KNOW THAT?!
SHUT UP AND GET BACK TO WORK.

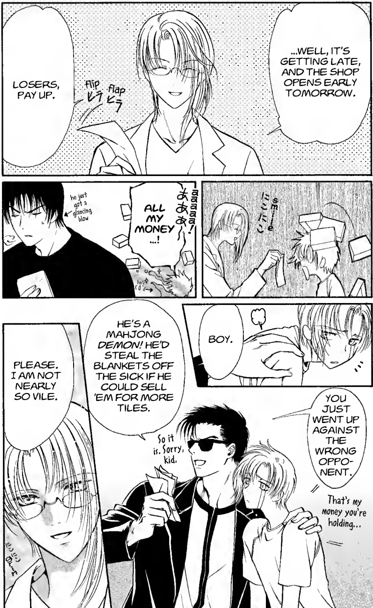
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局

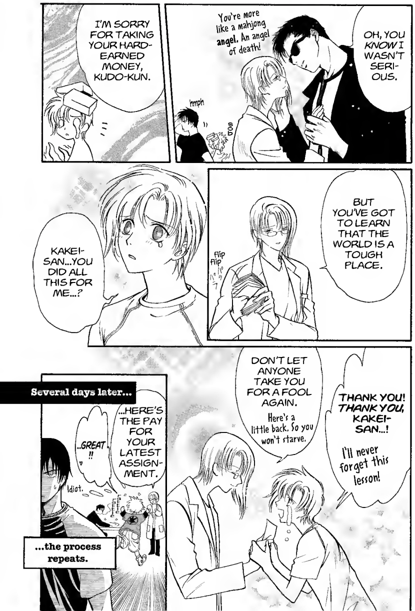
ILLEGAL DRUG

One day.


KUDO-KUN, RIKUO...
...HERE'S THE PAY FOR YOUR LATEST ASSIGNMENT.
KAKEI
...GREAT!!
MONEY, MONEY, MONEY...
YES. NOW THAT YOU HAVE SOME MONEY...
rattle


...What?
HUH...?
...LET'S PLAY MAHJONG.
URK!
うっ
ジャラ ジャラ
ジャラ ジャラ
EH?
BUT...
...I'VE NEVER PLAYED BEFORE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'LL TEACH YOU.
It's not hard at all.
OKAY. TO START WITH, THAT'S PIN ONE THREE...
But...
CHI.
OH.
THAT'S RON.
HUH ?!
RON!
eh? eh?
えっ えっ

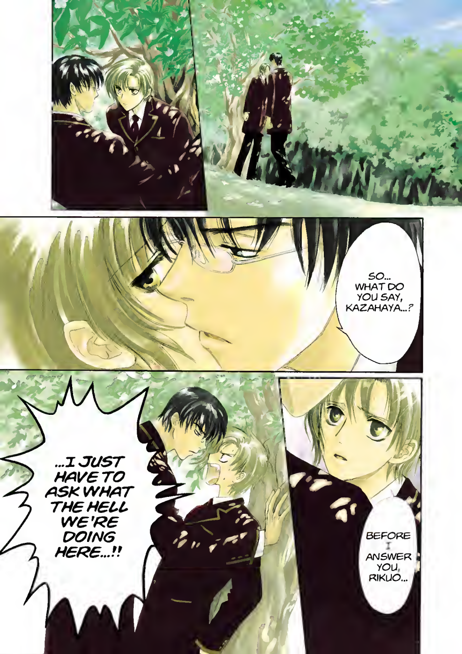

...WELL, IT'S GETTING LATE, AND THE SHOP OPENS EARLY TOMORROW.
LOSERS, PAY UP.
Flip Flap ヒラヒラ
にこにこ smile
ALL MY MONEY ...!
あああaaaaaa!
he just got a glancing blow
he's KO'd
BOY.
YOU JUST WENT UP AGAINST THE WRONG OPPONENT.
That's my money you're holding...
So it is. Sorry, kid.
HE'S A MAHJONG DEMON! HE'D STEAL THE BLANKETS OFF THE SICK IF HE COULD SELL 'EM FOR MORE TILES.
PLEASE. I AM NOT NEARLY SO VILE.
にこにこ grin

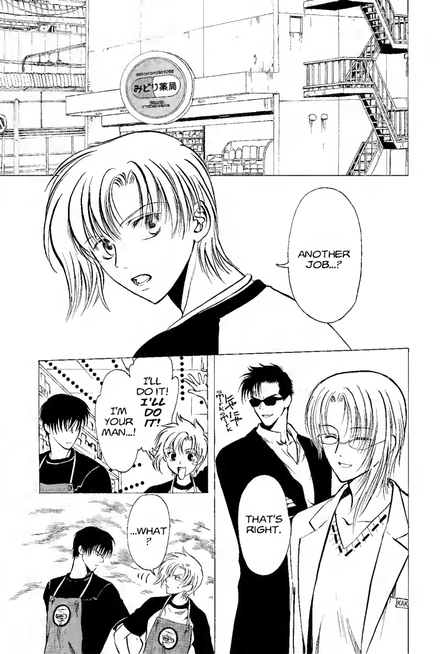

OH, YOU *KNOW* I WASN'T SERIOUS.
You're more like a mahjong **angel.** An angel of death!
hmph
sob
I'M SORRY FOR TAKING YOUR HARD-EARNED MONEY, KUDO-KUN.
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN THAT THE WORLD IS A TOUGH PLACE.
flip flip
パラ パラ
KAKEI-SAN...YOU DID ALL THIS FOR ME...?
THANK YOU! THANK YOU, KAKEI-SAN...!
I'll never forget this lesson!
DON'T LET ANYONE TAKE YOU FOR A FOOL AGAIN.
Here's a little back. So you won't starve.
Several days later...
...HERE'S THE PAY FOR YOUR LATEST ASSIGNMENT.
...GREAT!!
Idiot.
...the process repeats.

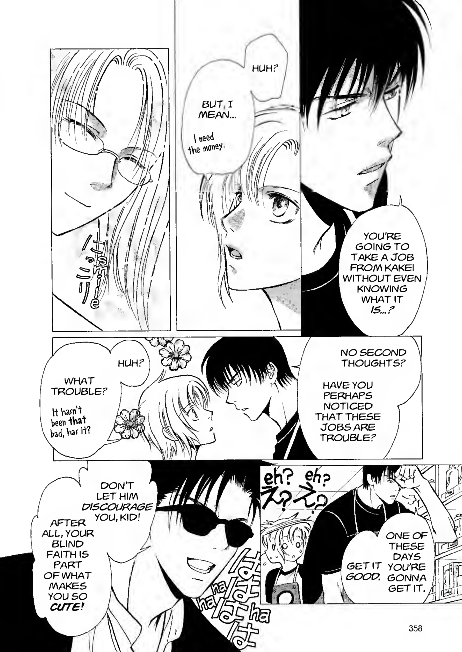
LEGAL DRUG

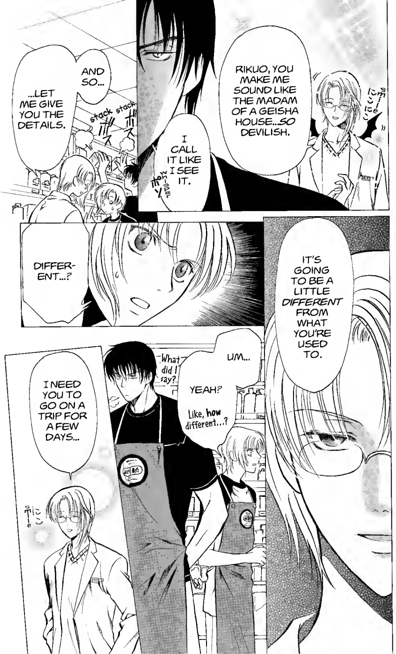
DRUG NO.11

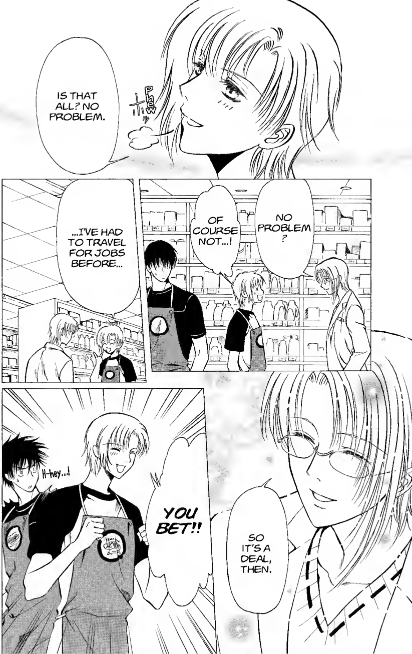
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

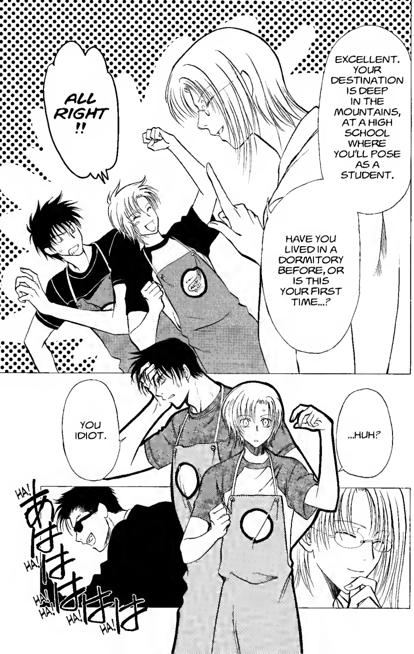

SO... WHAT DO YOU SAY, KAZAHAYA...?
BEFORE I ANSWER YOU, RIKUO...
...I JUST HAVE TO ASK WHAT THE HELL WE'RE DOING HERE...!!

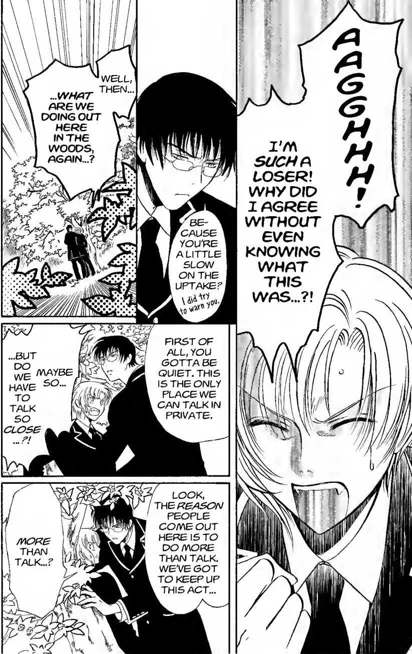

GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
ANOTHER JOB...?
ニヤニヤ smirk smirk
THAT'S RIGHT.
KAK
I'LL DO IT! I'LL DO IT!
I'M YOUR MAN...!
...WHAT?

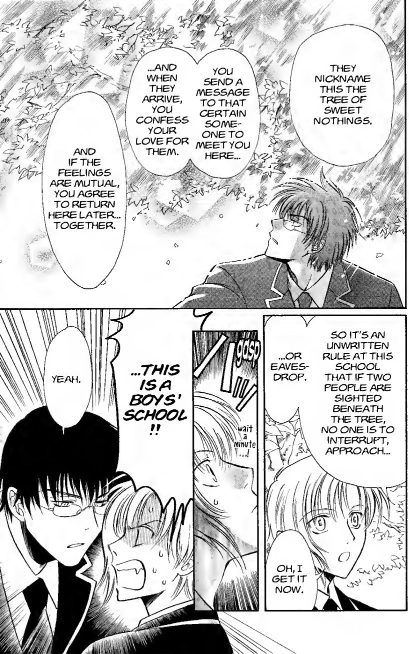

YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A JOB FROM KAKEI WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT IT IS...?
HUH?
BUT, I MEAN...
I need the money.
ニッコリ
smi~le
NO SECOND THOUGHTS?
HAVE YOU PERHAPS NOTICED THAT THESE JOBS ARE TROUBLE?
HUH?
WHAT TROUBLE?
It hasn't been that bad, has it?
eh? eh?
え?え?
ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU'RE GONNA GET IT.
GET IT GOOD.
DON'T LET HIM DISCOURAGE YOU, KID!
AFTER ALL, YOUR BLIND FAITH IS PART OF WHAT MAKES YOU SO CUTE!
ははははは
ha ha ha

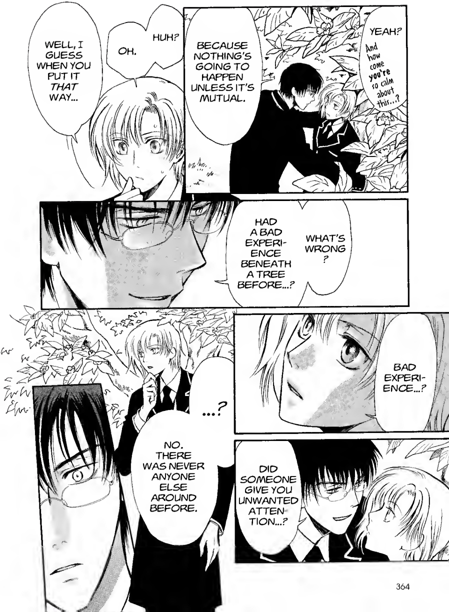

RIKUO, YOU MAKE ME SOUND LIKE THE MADAM OF A GEISHA HOUSE...*SO* DEVILISH.
smile にこにこ
I CALL IT LIKE I SEE IT.
whisper ボソ
AND SO...
...LET ME GIVE YOU THE DETAILS.
stack stack ボス ボス
IT'S GOING TO BE A LITTLE *DIFFERENT* FROM WHAT YOU'RE USED TO.
DIFFERENT...?
UM...
YEAH?
Like, **how** different...?
What did I say?
I NEED YOU TO GO ON A TRIP FOR A FEW DAYS...
smile にこ

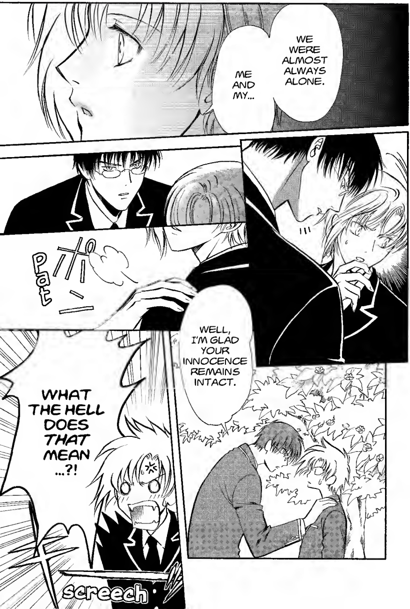

IS THAT ALL? NO PROBLEM.
Phew
NO PROBLEM?
OF COURSE NOT...!
...I'VE HAD TO TRAVEL FOR JOBS BEFORE...
SO IT'S A DEAL, THEN.
YOU BET!!
H-hey...!

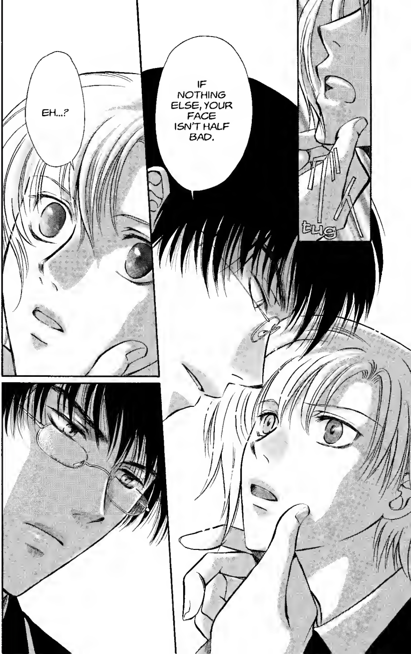

EXCELLENT. YOUR DESTINATION IS DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, AT A HIGH SCHOOL WHERE YOU'LL POSE AS A STUDENT.
ALL RIGHT!!
HAVE YOU LIVED IN A DORMITORY BEFORE, OR IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME...?
...HUH?
YOU IDIOT.
あははははは
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

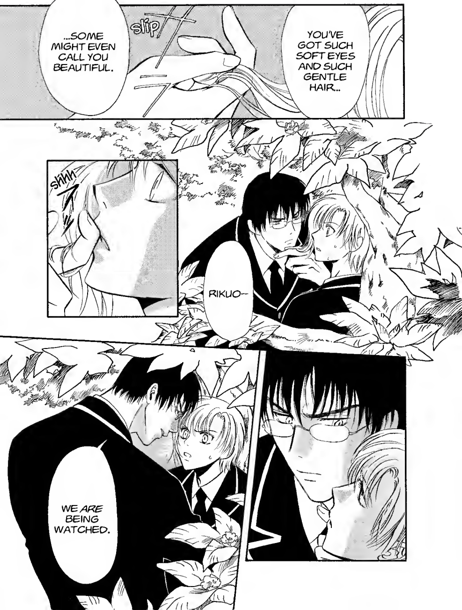

AAGGHHH!
I'M *SUCH* A LOSER! WHY DID I AGREE WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT THIS WAS...?!
WELL, THEN...
...*WHAT* ARE WE DOING OUT HERE IN THE WOODS, AGAIN...?
BECAUSE YOU'RE A LITTLE SLOW ON THE UPTAKE?
I did try to warn you.
FIRST OF ALL, YOU GOTTA BE QUIET. THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE WE CAN TALK IN PRIVATE.
MAYBE SO...
...BUT DO WE HAVE TO TALK SO *CLOSE* ...?!
LOOK, THE *REASON* PEOPLE COME OUT HERE IS TO DO MORE THAN TALK. WE'VE GOT TO KEEP UP THIS ACT...
MORE THAN TALK...?

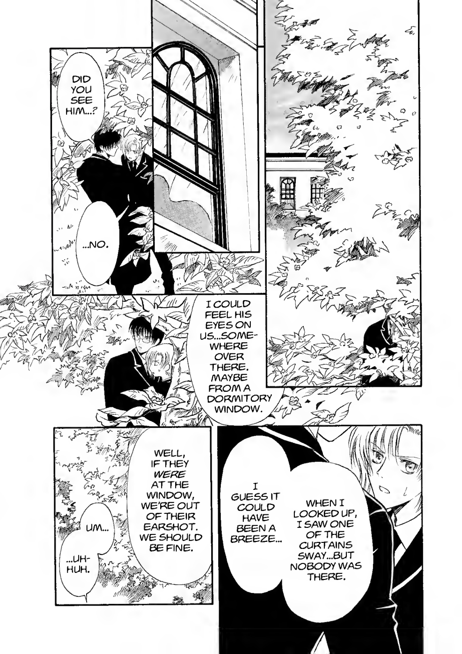

THEY NICKNAME THIS THE TREE OF SWEET NOTHINGS.
YOU SEND A MESSAGE TO THAT CERTAIN SOMEONE TO MEET YOU HERE...
...AND WHEN THEY ARRIVE, YOU CONFESS YOUR LOVE FOR THEM.
AND IF THE FEELINGS ARE MUTUAL, YOU AGREE TO RETURN HERE LATER... TOGETHER.
SO IT'S AN UNWRITTEN RULE AT THIS SCHOOL THAT IF TWO PEOPLE ARE SIGHTED BENEATH THE TREE, NO ONE IS TO INTERRUPT, APPROACH...
...OR EAVESDROP.
OH, I GET IT NOW.
gasp
wait a minute ...!
...THIS IS A BOYS' SCHOOL!!
YEAH.

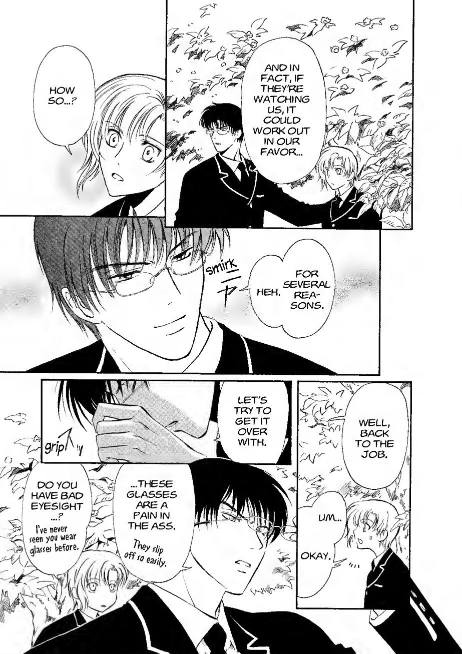

YEAH? And how come you're so calm about this...?
BECAUSE NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN UNLESS IT'S MUTUAL.
HUH? OH.
WELL, I GUESS WHEN YOU PUT IT *THAT* WAY...
WHAT'S WRONG?
HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE BENEATH A TREE BEFORE...?
BAD EXPERIENCE...?
DID SOMEONE GIVE YOU UNWANTED ATTENTION...?
...?
NO. THERE WAS NEVER ANYONE ELSE AROUND BEFORE.

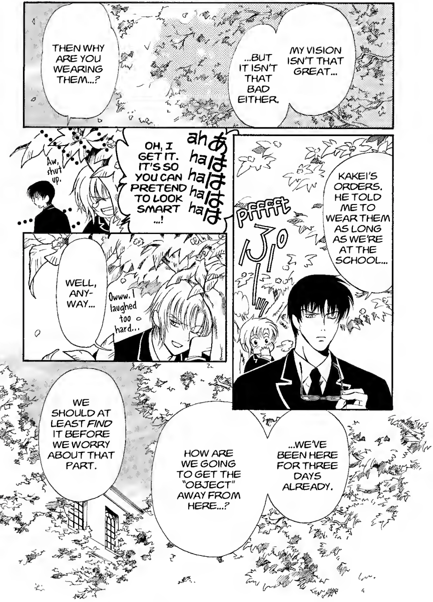

WE WERE ALMOST ALWAYS ALONE.
ME AND MY...
Pat
WELL, I'M GLAD YOUR INNOCENCE REMAINS INTACT.
WHAT THE HELL DOES *THAT* MEAN ...?!
screech

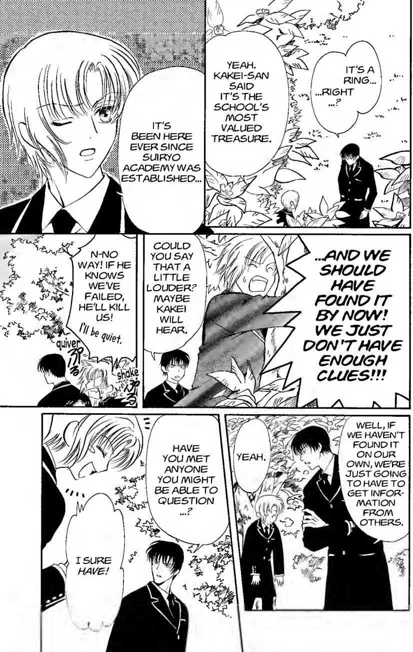

tug
IF NOTHING ELSE, YOUR FACE ISN'T HALF BAD.
EH...?

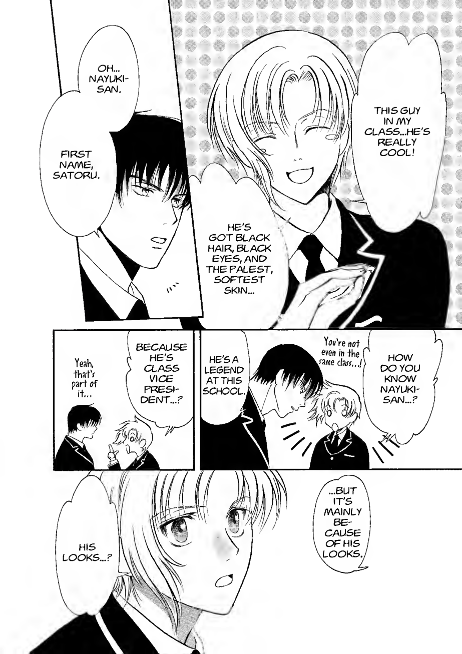

YOU'VE GOT SUCH SOFT EYES AND SUCH GENTLE HAIR...
slip
...SOME MIGHT EVEN CALL YOU BEAUTIFUL.
RIKUO--
shhh
WE *ARE* BEING WATCHED.

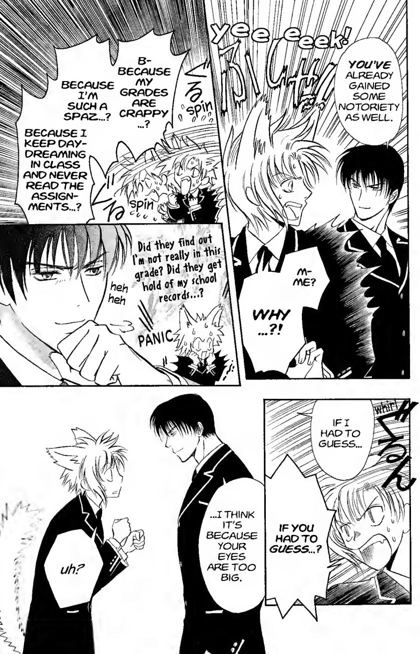

DID YOU SEE HIM...?
...NO.
I COULD FEEL HIS EYES ON US...SOMEWHERE OVER THERE. MAYBE FROM A DORMITORY WINDOW.
WHEN I LOOKED UP, I SAW ONE OF THE CURTAINS SWAY...BUT NOBODY WAS THERE.
I GUESS IT COULD HAVE BEEN A BREEZE...
WELL, IF THEY *WERE* AT THE WINDOW, WE'RE OUT OF THEIR EARSHOT. WE SHOULD BE FINE.
UM...
...UH-HUH.

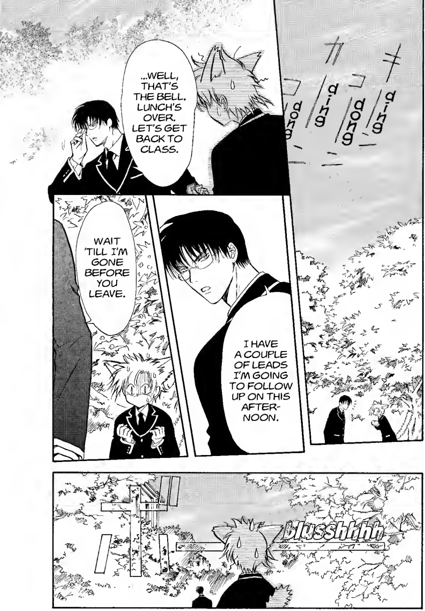

AND IN FACT, IF THEY'RE WATCHING US, IT COULD WORK OUT IN OUR FAVOR...
HOW SO...?
smirk
HEH.
FOR SEVERAL REASONS.
WELL, BACK TO THE JOB.
UM...
OKAY.
LET'S TRY TO GET IT OVER WITH.
grip
DO YOU HAVE BAD EYESIGHT...?
I've never seen you wear glasses before.
...THESE GLASSES ARE A PAIN IN THE ASS.
They slip off so easily.

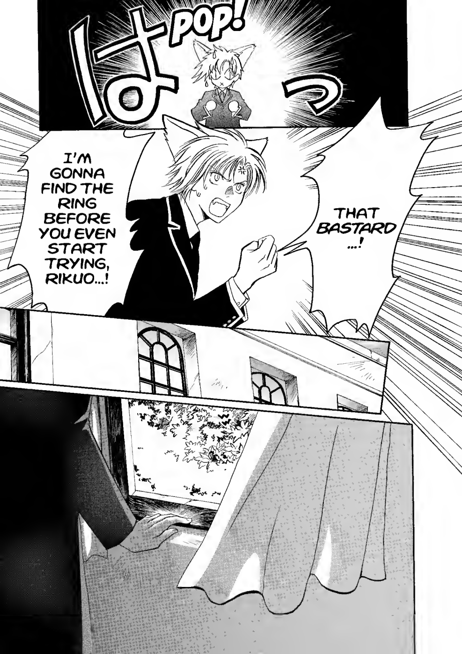

MY VISION ISN'T THAT GREAT...
...BUT IT ISN'T THAT BAD EITHER.
THEN WHY ARE YOU WEARING THEM...?
KAKEI'S ORDERS. HE TOLD ME TO WEAR THEM AS LONG AS WE'RE AT THE SCHOOL...
pfffft
ぷーーっ
ah ha ha ha ha
あははは
OH, I GET IT. IT'S SO YOU CAN PRETEND TO LOOK SMART...!
Aw, shut up.
Owww. I laughed too hard...
WELL, ANYWAY...
...WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR THREE DAYS ALREADY.
HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THE "OBJECT" AWAY FROM HERE...?
WE SHOULD AT LEAST *FIND* IT BEFORE WE WORRY ABOUT THAT PART.


IT'S A RING... ...RIGHT ...?
YEAH. KAKEI-SAN SAID IT'S THE SCHOOL'S MOST VALUED TREASURE.
IT'S BEEN HERE EVER SINCE SUIRYO ACADEMY WAS ESTABLISHED...
...AND WE SHOULD HAVE FOUND IT BY NOW! WE JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH CLUES!!!
COULD YOU SAY THAT A LITTLE LOUDER? MAYBE KAKEI WILL HEAR.
N-NO WAY! IF HE KNOWS WE'VE FAILED, HE'LL KILL US!
I'll be quiet.
quiver
shake
WELL, IF WE HAVEN'T FOUND IT ON OUR OWN, WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO GET INFORMATION FROM OTHERS.
YEAH.
HAVE YOU MET ANYONE YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO QUESTION ...?
I SURE HAVE!


THIS GUY IN MY CLASS...HE'S REALLY COOL!
HE'S GOT BLACK HAIR, BLACK EYES, AND THE PALEST, SOFTEST SKIN...
OH... NAYUKI-SAN.
FIRST NAME, SATORU.
HOW DO YOU KNOW NAYUKI-SAN...?
You're not even in the same class...!
HE'S A LEGEND AT THIS SCHOOL.
BECAUSE HE'S CLASS VICE PRESIDENT...?
Yeah, that's part of it...
...BUT IT'S MAINLY BECAUSE OF HIS LOOKS.
HIS LOOKS...?


Yeeeeek!
YOU'VE ALREADY GAINED SOME NOTORIETY AS WELL.
M-ME?
WHY...?!
B-BECAUSE MY GRADES ARE CRAPPY...?
BECAUSE I'M SUCH A SPAZ...?
spin
BECAUSE I KEEP DAY-DREAMING IN CLASS AND NEVER READ THE ASSIGNMENTS...?
spin
Did they find out I'm not really in this grade? Did they get hold of my school records...?
heh heh
PANIC
whirl
IF I HAD TO GUESS...
IF YOU HAD TO GUESS...?
...I THINK IT'S BECAUSE YOUR EYES ARE TOO BIG.
uh?


ding dong ding dong
...WELL, THAT'S THE BELL. LUNCH'S OVER. LET'S GET BACK TO CLASS.
I HAVE A COUPLE OF LEADS I'M GOING TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS AFTER-NOON.
WAIT 'TILL I'M GONE BEFORE YOU LEAVE.
blusshhhh


はっ
POP!
THAT BASTARD ...!
I'M GONNA FIND THE RING BEFORE YOU EVEN START TRYING, RIKUO...!

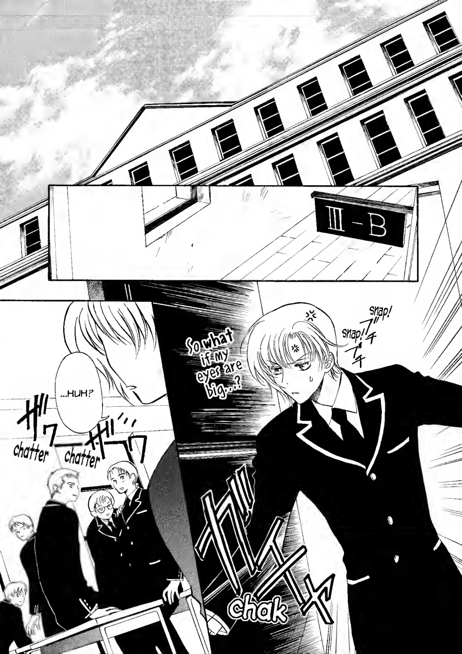
LEGAL DRUG

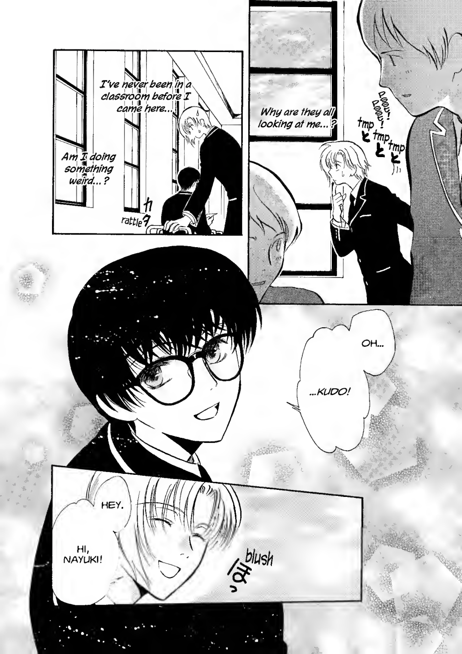
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局

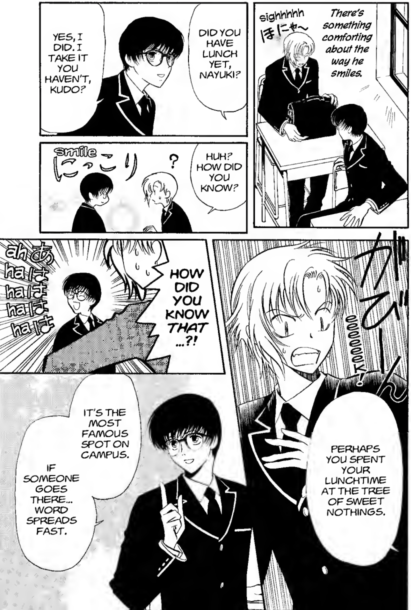
LEGAL DRUG

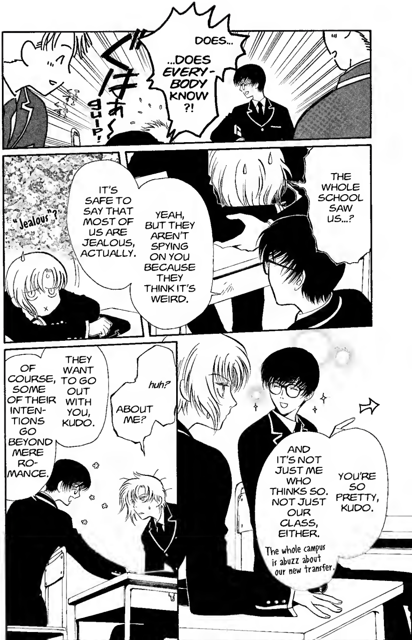
DRUG NO.12

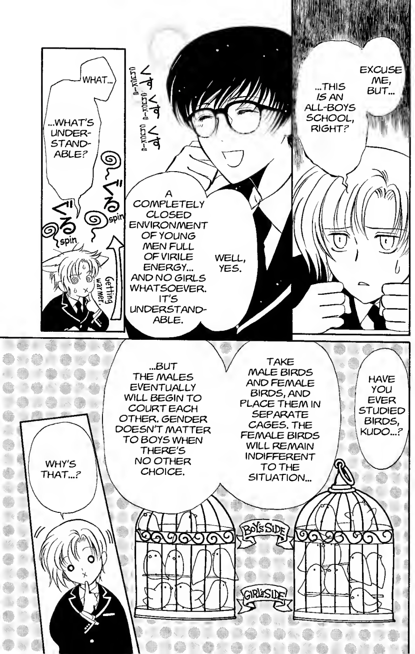
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

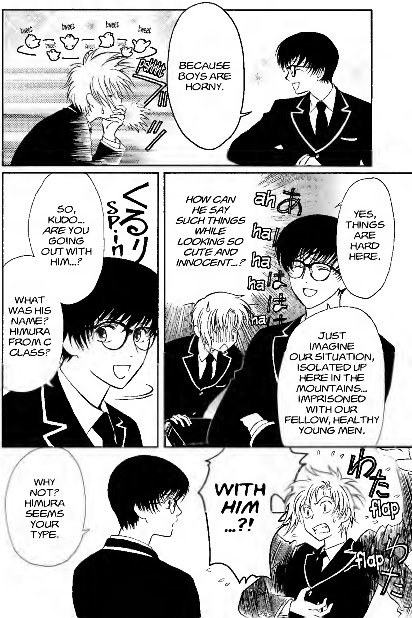

III - B
snap!
ブチ
snap!
ブチ
So what if my eyes are big..?
ガチャ
chak
...HUH?
ザワ
chatter
ザワ
chatter

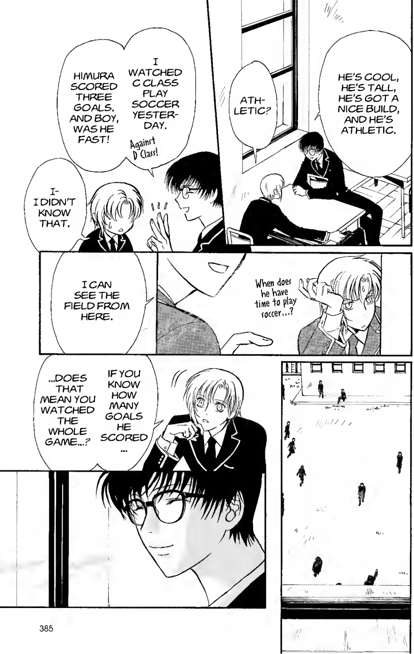

Why are they all looking at me...?
Pssst! Pssst!
tmp と tmp と tmp と
I've never been in a classroom before I came here...
Am I doing something weird...?
rattle ガタ
OH...
...KUDO!
HEY.
HI, NAYUKI!
blush ほっ

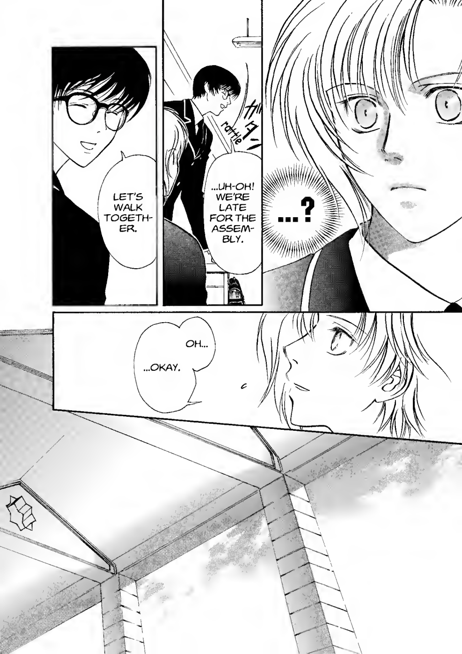

sighhhhh
ほにゃ～
There's something comforting about the way he smiles.
DID YOU HAVE LUNCH YET, NAYUKI?
YES, I DID. I TAKE IT YOU HAVEN'T, KUDO?
?
HUH? HOW DID YOU KNOW?
smile
にっこり
がびーん
eeeeeek!
PERHAPS YOU SPENT YOUR LUNCHTIME AT THE TREE OF SWEET NOTHINGS.
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT ...?!
ahあ
haは
haは
haは
haは
IT'S THE MOST FAMOUS SPOT ON CAMPUS.
IF SOMEONE GOES THERE... WORD SPREADS FAST.

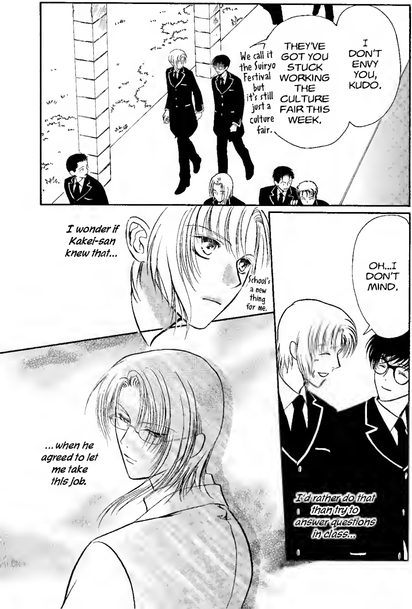

DOES... ...DOES EVERYBODY KNOW?!
gulp!
THE WHOLE SCHOOL SAW US...?
YEAH, BUT THEY AREN'T SPYING ON YOU BECAUSE THEY THINK IT'S WEIRD.
IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT MOST OF US ARE JEALOUS, ACTUALLY.
“Jealous”?
YOU'RE SO PRETTY, KUDO.
AND IT'S NOT JUST ME WHO THINKS SO. NOT JUST OUR CLASS, EITHER.
The whole campus is abuzz about our new transfer.
huh?
ABOUT ME?
THEY WANT TO GO OUT WITH YOU, KUDO.
OF COURSE, SOME OF THEIR INTENTIONS GO BEYOND MERE ROMANCE.

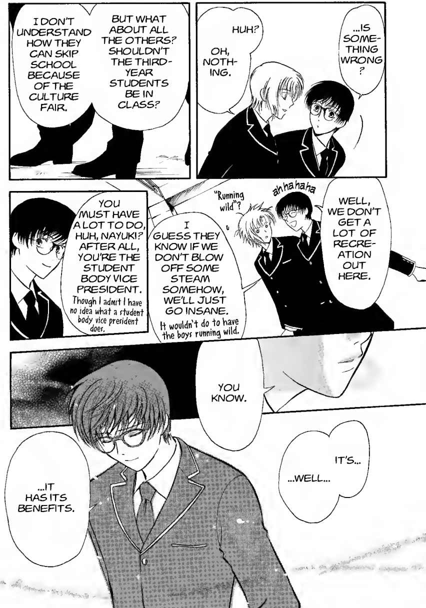

EXCUSE ME, BUT...
...THIS IS AN ALL-BOYS SCHOOL, RIGHT?
WELL, YES.
A COMPLETELY CLOSED ENVIRONMENT OF YOUNG MEN FULL OF VIRILE ENERGY... AND NO GIRLS WHATSOEVER. IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE.
くす くす くす
chuckle chuckle chuckle
WHAT...
...WHAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE?
ぐる ぐる
spin spin
Getting warmer.
HAVE YOU EVER STUDIED BIRDS, KUDO...?
TAKE MALE BIRDS AND FEMALE BIRDS, AND PLACE THEM IN SEPARATE CAGES. THE FEMALE BIRDS WILL REMAIN INDIFFERENT TO THE SITUATION...
...BUT THE MALES EVENTUALLY WILL BEGIN TO COURT EACH OTHER. GENDER DOESN'T MATTER TO BOYS WHEN THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE.
BOY'S SIDE
GIRL'S SIDE
WHY'S THAT...?

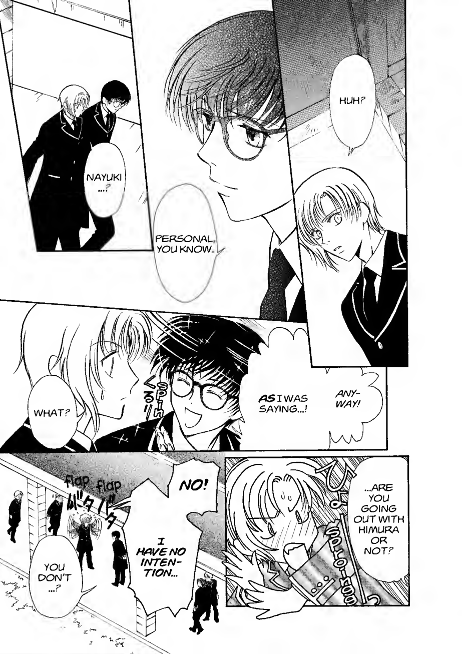

tweet tweet tweet tweet
tweet tweet tweet
pshhht
BECAUSE BOYS ARE HORNY.
YES, THINGS ARE HARD HERE.
ahあ ha は ha ha は ha
HOW CAN HE SAY SUCH THINGS WHILE LOOKING SO CUTE AND INNOCENT...?
JUST IMAGINE OUR SITUATION, ISOLATED UP HERE IN THE MOUNTAINS... IMPRISONED WITH OUR FELLOW, HEALTHY YOUNG MEN.
くるり spin
SO, KUDO... ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH HIM...?
WHAT WAS HIS NAME? HIMURA FROM C CLASS?
わた flap
わた flap
WITH HIM ...?!
WHY NOT? HIMURA SEEMS YOUR TYPE.

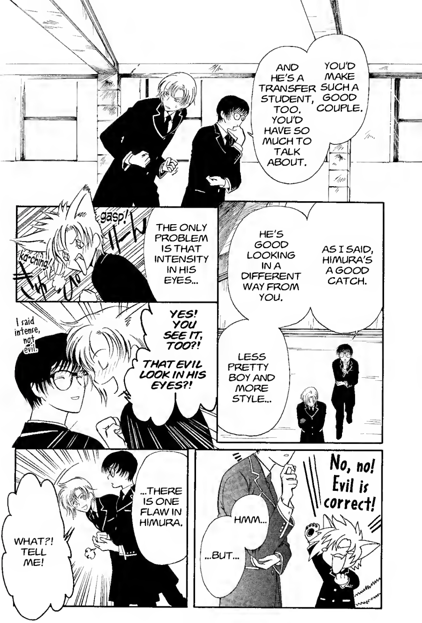

HE'S COOL, HE'S TALL, HE'S GOT A NICE BUILD, AND HE'S ATHLETIC.
ATH-LETIC?
I WATCHED C CLASS PLAY SOCCER YESTERDAY.
Against D Class!
HIMURA SCORED THREE GOALS. AND BOY, WAS HE FAST!
I- I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
When does he have time to play soccer...?
I CAN SEE THE FIELD FROM HERE.
IF YOU KNOW HOW MANY GOALS HE SCORED...
...DOES THAT MEAN YOU WATCHED THE WHOLE GAME...?

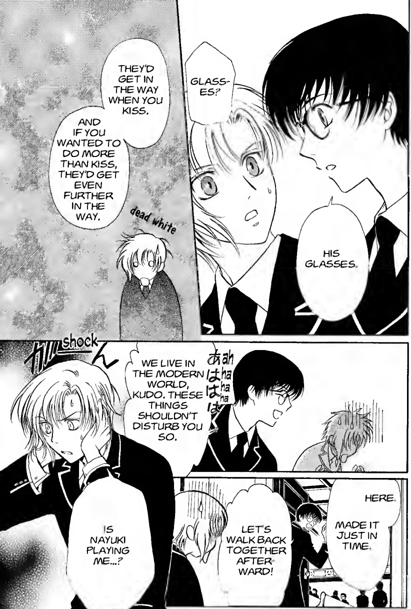

...?
rattle
...UH-OH! WE'RE LATE FOR THE ASSEMBLY.
LET'S WALK TOGETHER.
OH... ...OKAY.

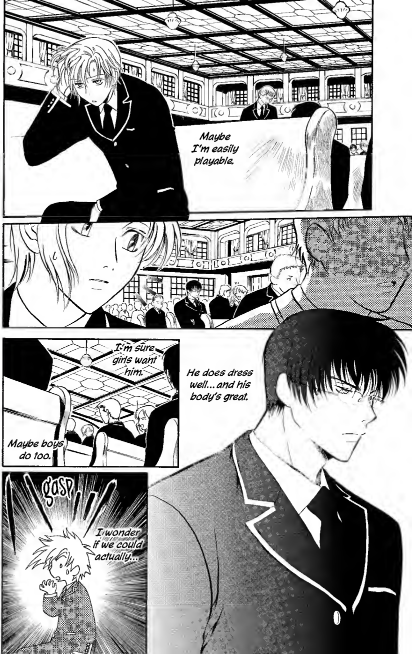

THEY'VE GOT YOU STUCK WORKING THE CULTURE FAIR THIS WEEK.
I DON'T ENVY YOU, KUDO.
We call it the Suiryo Festival but it's still just a culture fair.
OH...I DON'T MIND.
I'd rather do that than try to answer questions in class...
School's a new thing for me.
I wonder if Kakei-san knew that...
...when he agreed to let me take this job.

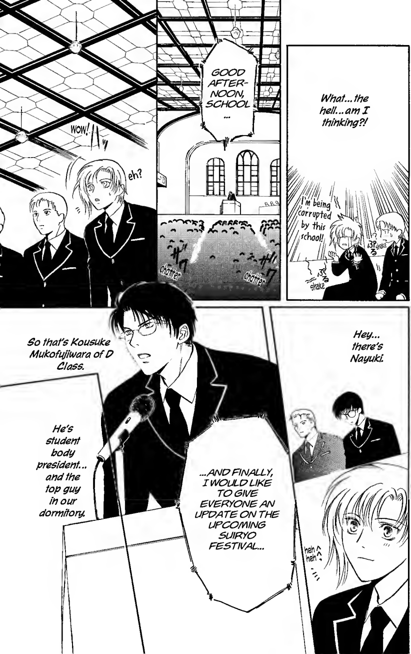

...IS SOMETHING WRONG?
HUH?
OH, NOTHING.
BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THE OTHERS? SHOULDN'T THE THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS BE IN CLASS?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THEY CAN SKIP SCHOOL BECAUSE OF THE CULTURE FAIR.
WELL, WE DON'T GET A LOT OF RECREATION OUT HERE.
ahhahaha
"Running wild"?
I GUESS THEY KNOW IF WE DON'T BLOW OFF SOME STEAM SOMEHOW, WE'LL JUST GO INSANE.
It wouldn't do to have the boys running wild.
YOU MUST HAVE A LOT TO DO, HUH, NAYUKI? AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE STUDENT BODY VICE PRESIDENT.
Though I admit I have no idea what a student body vice president does.
YOU KNOW.
IT'S... ...WELL...
...IT HAS ITS BENEFITS.

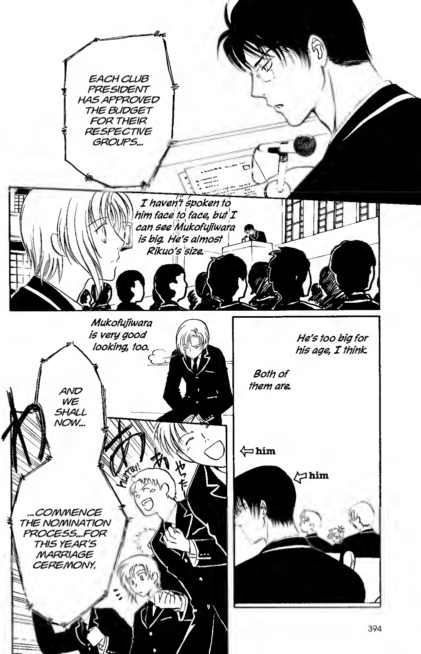

HUH?
PERSONAL, YOU KNOW.
NAYUKI ...?
ANY-WAY!
AS I WAS SAYING...!
くるり spin
WHAT?
...ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH HIMURA OR NOT?
sproing
NO!
I HAVE NO INTENTION...
flap flap バタバタ
YOU DON'T ...?

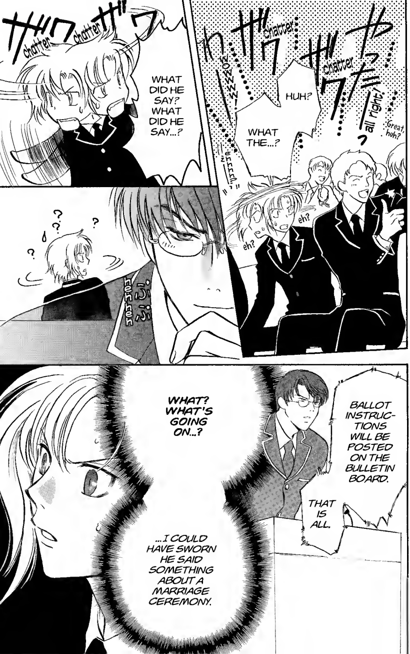

YOU'D MAKE SUCH A GOOD COUPLE.
AND HE'S A TRANSFER STUDENT, TOO. YOU'D HAVE SO MUCH TO TALK ABOUT.
AS I SAID, HIMURA'S A GOOD CATCH.
HE'S GOOD LOOKING IN A DIFFERENT WAY FROM YOU.
LESS PRETTY BOY AND MORE STYLE...
THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT INTENSITY IN HIS EYES...
gasp!
ka-ching!
YES! YOU SEE IT, TOO?! THAT EVIL LOOK IN HIS EYES?!
I said intense, not evil.
No, no! Evil is correct!
HMM...
...BUT...
...THERE IS ONE FLAW IN HIMURA.
WHAT?! TELL ME!

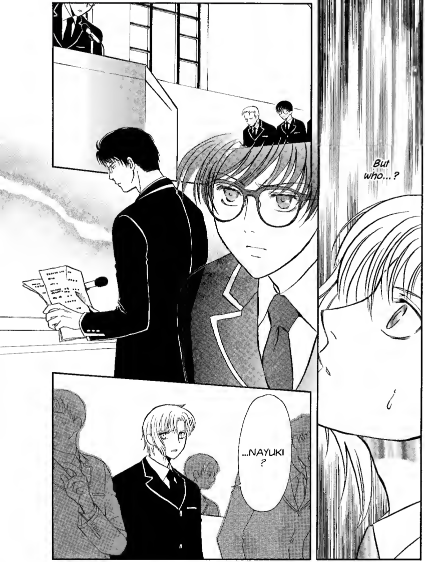

GLASSES?
HIS GLASSES.
THEY'D GET IN THE WAY WHEN YOU KISS.
AND IF YOU WANTED TO DO MORE THAN KISS, THEY'D GET EVEN FURTHER IN THE WAY.
dead white
あははは ahahaha
WE LIVE IN THE MODERN WORLD, KUDO. THESE THINGS SHOULDN'T DISTURB YOU SO.
shock
HERE.
MADE IT JUST IN TIME.
LET'S WALK BACK TOGETHER AFTERWARD!
IS NAYUKI PLAYING ME...?

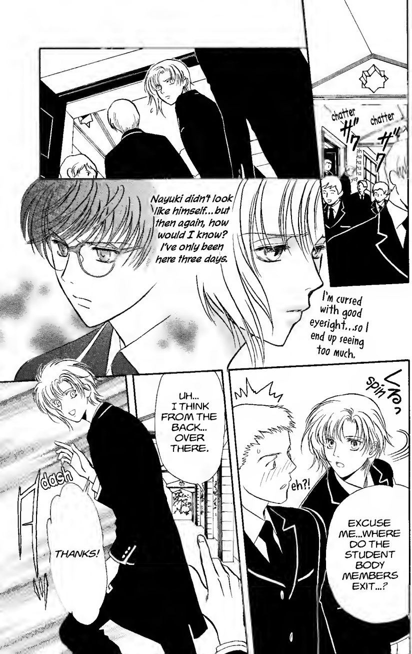

Maybe I'm easily playable.
He does dress well...and his body's great.
I'm sure girls want him.
Maybe boys do too.
gasp
I wonder if we could actually...

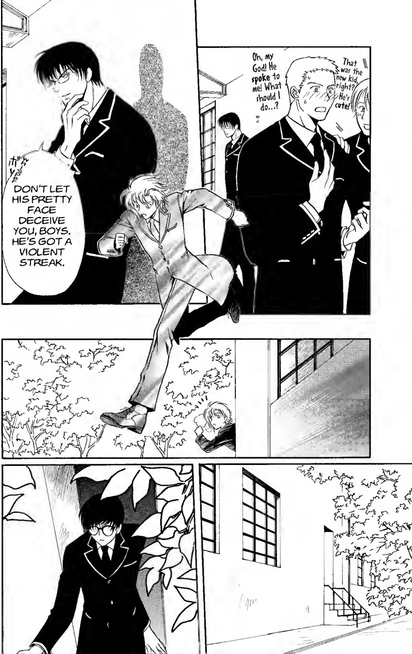

WOW!
eh?
GOOD AFTERNOON, SCHOOL...
chatter
chatter
What...the hell...am I thinking?!
I'm being corrupted by this school!
shake
shake
So that's Kousuke Mukofujiwara of D Class.
He's student body president... and the top guy in our dormitory.
...AND FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE EVERYONE AN UPDATE ON THE UPCOMING SUIRYO FESTIVAL...
Hey... there's Nayuki.
heh heh

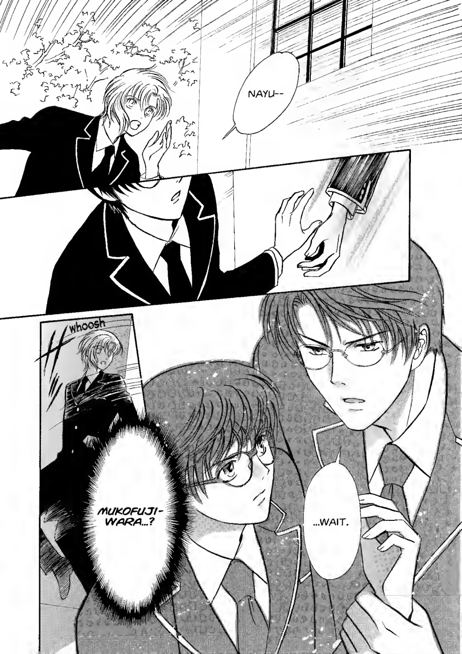

EACH CLUB PRESIDENT HAS APPROVED THE BUDGET FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE GROUPS...
I haven't spoken to him face to face, but I can see Mukofujiwara is big. He's almost Rikuo's size.
He's too big for his age, I think.
Both of them are.
him
him
Mukofujiwara is very good looking, too.
AND WE SHALL NOW...
...COMMENCE THE NOMINATION PROCESS...FOR THIS YEAR'S MARRIAGE CEREMONY.
わ
あ
やった!
Hurray!

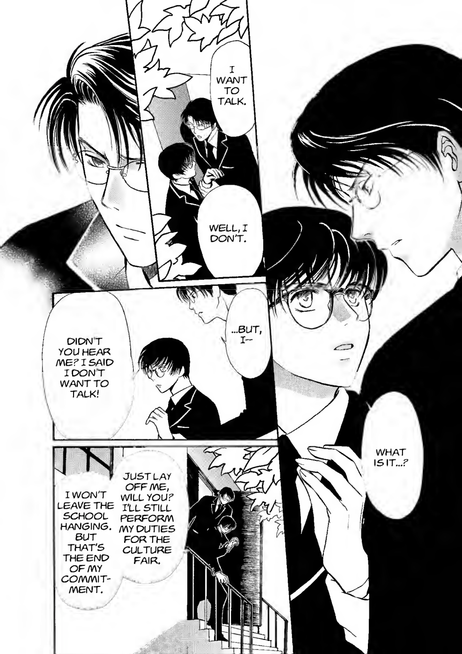

ザワ
chatter
ザワ
chatter
わーっ
all right!
Great, huh?
わ
WOWWWW!
HUH?
WHAT THE...?
ehhhhh?
eh?
eh?
ザワ
chatter
ザワ
chatter
WHAT DID HE SAY? WHAT DID HE SAY...?
heh heh
ふっ ふっ
BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD.
THAT IS ALL.
WHAT? WHAT'S GOING ON...?
...I COULD HAVE SWORN HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

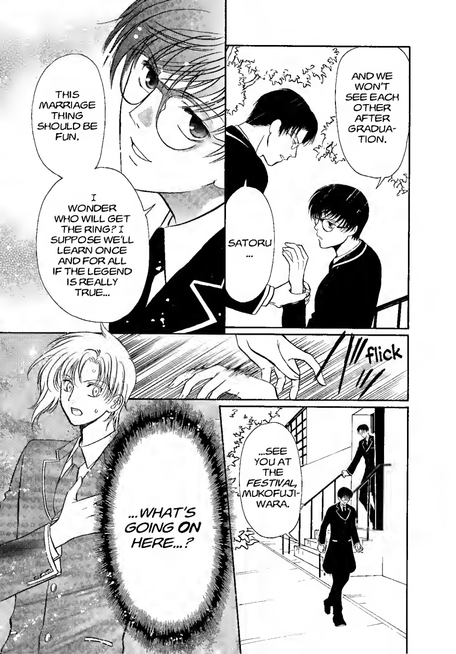

But who...?
...NAYUKI ?


chatter ザワ
chatter ザワ
ah ha ha ha ha yep
Nayuki didn't look like himself...but then again, how would I know? I've only been here three days.
I'm cursed with good eyesight...so I end up seeing too much.
spin くるっ
eh?!
EXCUSE ME...WHERE DO THE STUDENT BODY MEMBERS EXIT...?
UH... I THINK FROM THE BACK... OVER THERE.
dash
THANKS!


That was the new kid, right? He's cute!
Oh, my God! He spoke to me! What should I do...?
DON'T LET HIS PRETTY FACE DECEIVE YOU, BOYS. HE'S GOT A VIOLENT STREAK.


NAYU--
...WAIT.
MUKOFUJI-WARA...?
whoosh

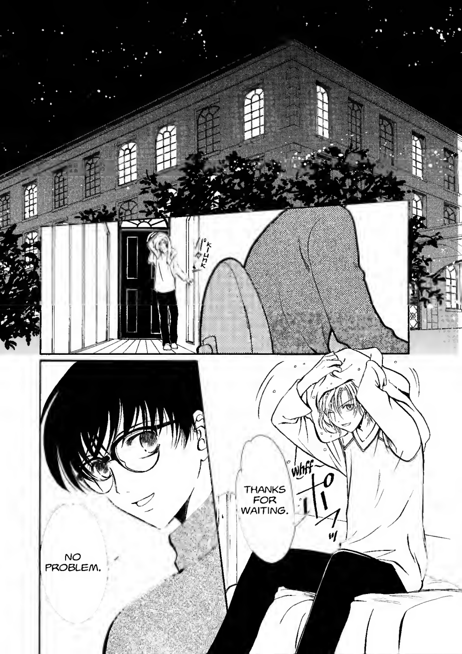

WHAT IS IT...?
I WANT TO TALK.
WELL, I DON'T.
...BUT, I--
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? I SAID I DON'T WANT TO TALK!
JUST LAY OFF ME, WILL YOU? I'LL STILL PERFORM MY DUTIES FOR THE CULTURE FAIR.
I WON'T LEAVE THE SCHOOL HANGING. BUT THAT'S THE END OF MY COMMITMENT.

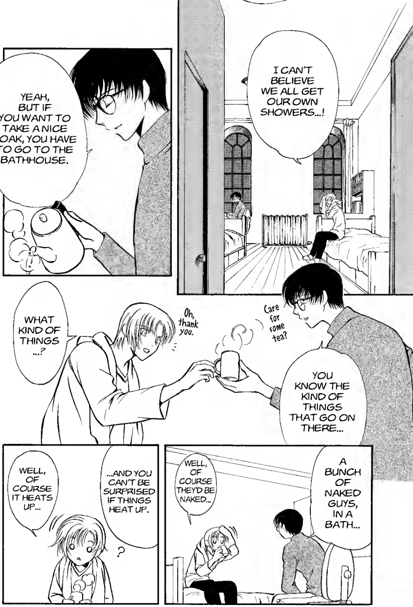

THIS MARRIAGE THING SHOULD BE FUN.
I WONDER WHO WILL GET THE RING? I SUPPOSE WE'LL LEARN ONCE AND FOR ALL IF THE LEGEND IS REALLY TRUE...
AND WE WON'T SEE EACH OTHER AFTER GRADUATION.
SATORU...
flick
...SEE YOU AT THE FESTIVAL, MUKOFUJIWARA.
...WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...?

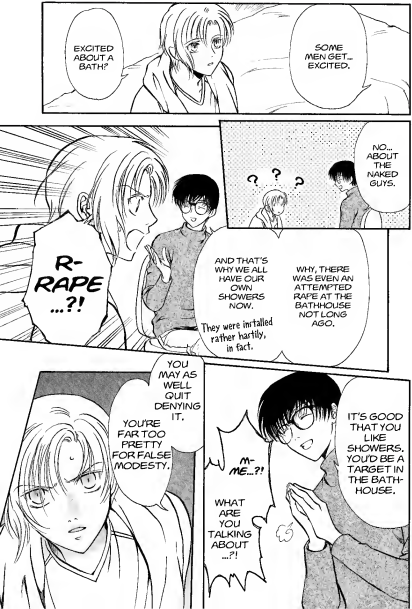
LEGAL DRUG

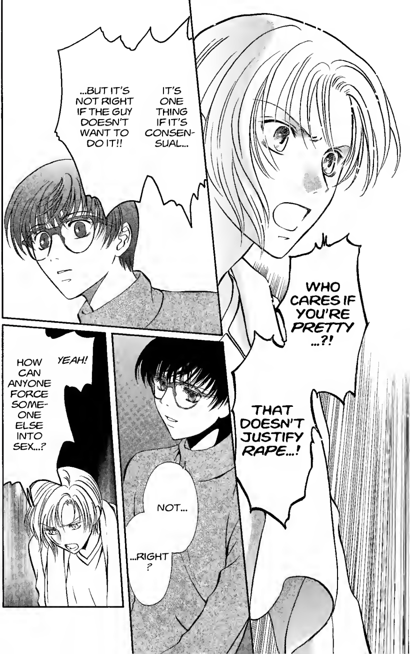
DRUG NO.13

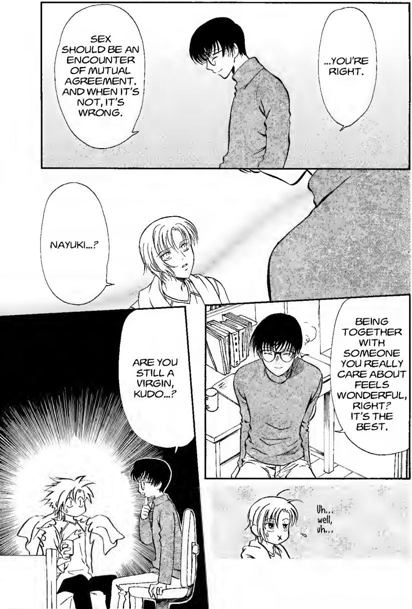
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

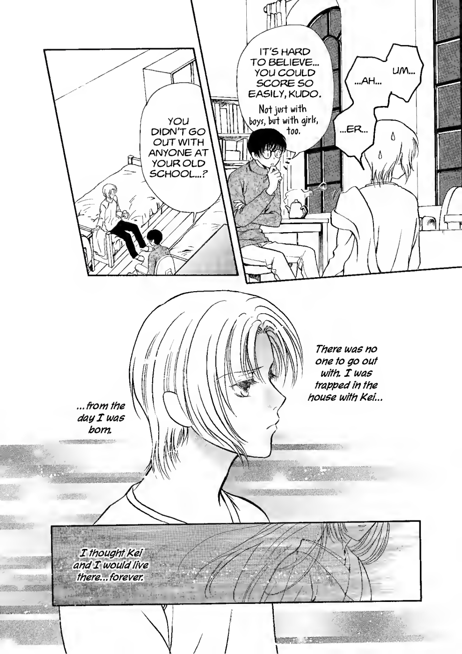

KLINK
THANKS FOR WAITING.
whff~
NO PROBLEM.

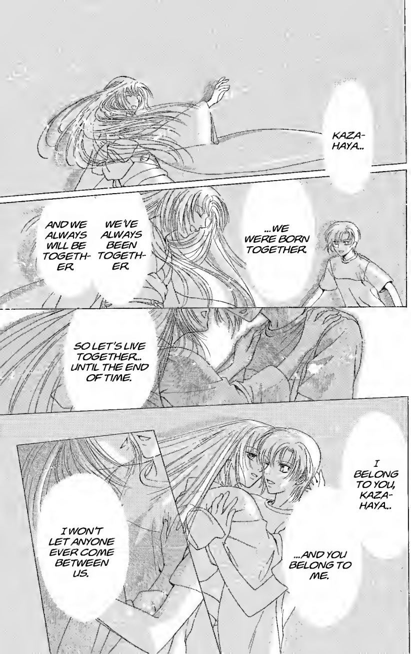

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE ALL GET OUR OWN SHOWERS...!
YEAH, BUT IF YOU WANT TO TAKE A NICE SOAK, YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHHOUSE.
Care for some tea?
Oh, thank you.
YOU KNOW THE KIND OF THINGS THAT GO ON THERE...
WHAT KIND OF THINGS ...?
A BUNCH OF NAKED GUYS, IN A BATH...
WELL, OF COURSE THEY'D BE NAKED...
...AND YOU CAN'T BE SURPRISED IF THINGS HEAT UP.
WELL, OF COURSE IT HEATS UP...
?

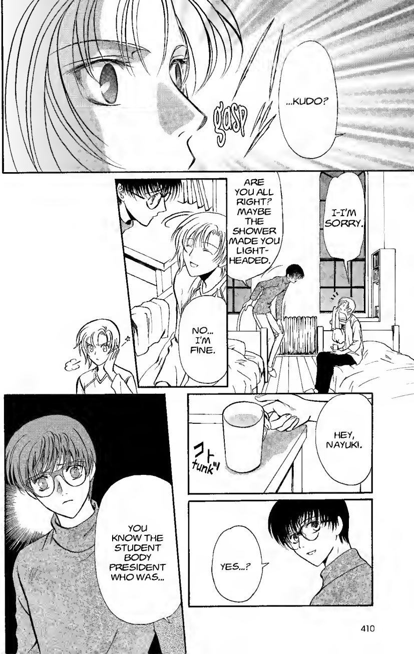

SOME MEN GET... EXCITED.
EXCITED ABOUT A BATH?
NO... ABOUT THE NAKED GUYS.
? ? ?
WHY, THERE WAS EVEN AN ATTEMPTED RAPE AT THE BATHHOUSE NOT LONG AGO.
AND THAT'S WHY WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN SHOWERS NOW.
They were installed rather hastily, in fact.
R-RAPE ...?!
IT'S GOOD THAT YOU LIKE SHOWERS. YOU'D BE A TARGET IN THE BATHHOUSE.
M-ME...?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ...?!
YOU MAY AS WELL QUIT DENYING IT.
YOU'RE FAR TOO PRETTY FOR FALSE MODESTY.

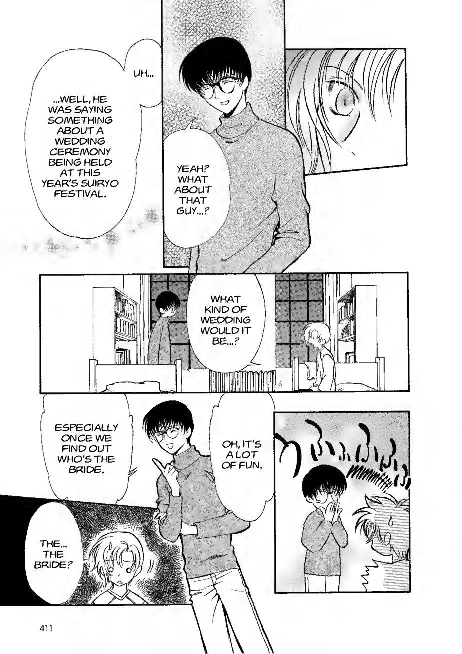

IT'S ONE THING IF IT'S CONSENSUAL...
...BUT IT'S NOT RIGHT IF THE GUY DOESN'T WANT TO DO IT!!
WHO CARES IF YOU'RE *PRETTY*...?!
THAT DOESN'T JUSTIFY *RAPE*...!
NOT...
...RIGHT?
YEAH!
HOW CAN ANYONE FORCE SOMEONE ELSE INTO SEX...?

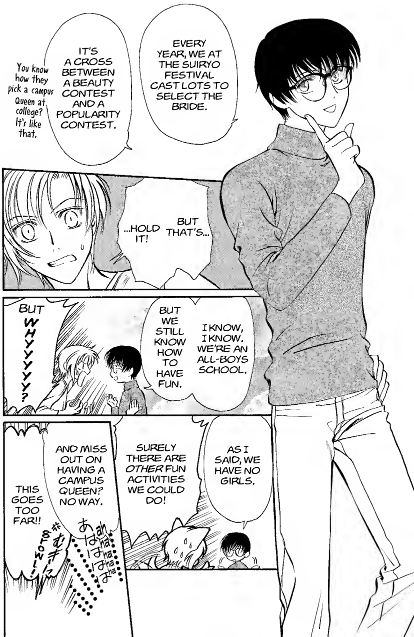

SEX SHOULD BE AN ENCOUNTER OF MUTUAL AGREEMENT. AND WHEN IT'S NOT, IT'S WRONG.
...YOU'RE RIGHT.
NAYUKI...?
BEING TOGETHER WITH SOMEONE YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT FEELS WONDERFUL, RIGHT? IT'S THE BEST.
ARE YOU STILL A VIRGIN, KUDO...?
Uh... well, uh...

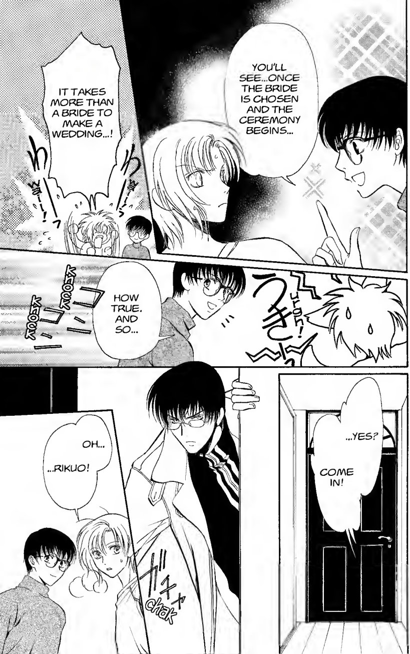

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE... YOU COULD SCORE SO EASILY, KUDO.
Not just with boys, but with girls, too.
UM... ...AH... ...ER...
YOU DIDN'T GO OUT WITH ANYONE AT YOUR OLD SCHOOL...?
There was no one to go out with. I was trapped in the house with Kei...
...from the day I was born.
I thought Kei and I would live there...forever.

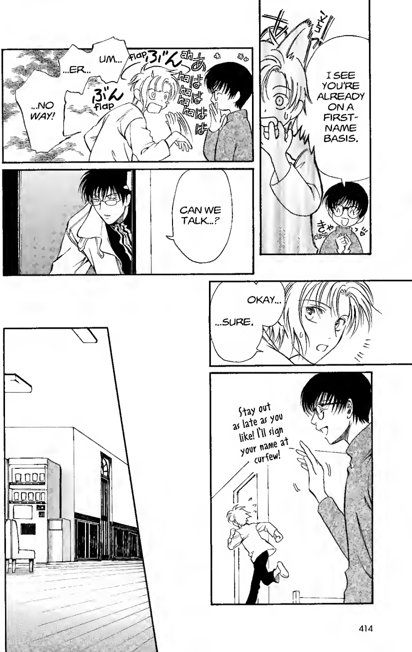

KAZA-HAYA...
...WE WERE BORN TOGETHER.
WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOGETHER.
AND WE ALWAYS WILL BE TOGETHER.
SO LET'S LIVE TOGETHER... UNTIL THE END OF TIME.
I BELONG TO YOU, KAZA-HAYA...
...AND YOU BELONG TO ME.
I WON'T LET ANYONE EVER COME BETWEEN US.

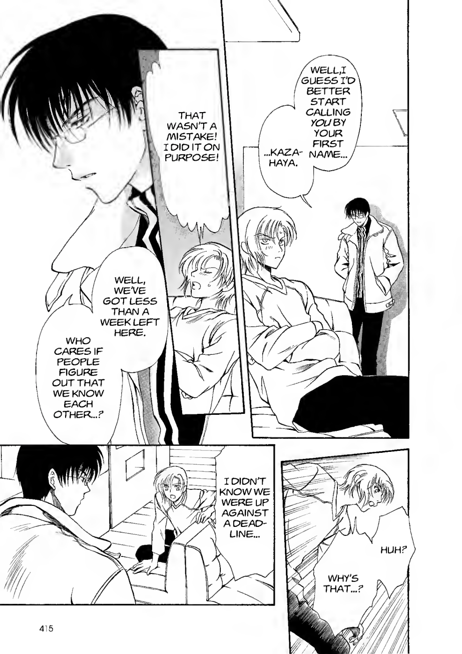

gasp
...KUDO?
I-I'M SORRY.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? MAYBE THE SHOWER MADE YOU LIGHT-HEADED.
NO... I'M FINE.
HEY, NAYUKI.
コト tunk
YES...?
YOU KNOW THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT WHO WAS...

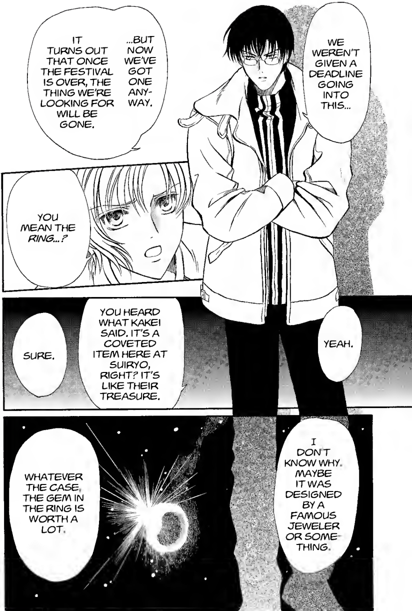

YEAH? WHAT ABOUT THAT GUY...?
UH...
...WELL, HE WAS SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT A WEDDING CEREMONY BEING HELD AT THIS YEAR'S SUIRYO FESTIVAL.
WHAT KIND OF WEDDING WOULD IT BE...?
うふふふふ
MMMMM
OH, IT'S A LOT OF FUN.
ESPECIALLY ONCE WE FIND OUT WHO'S THE BRIDE.
THE... THE BRIDE?

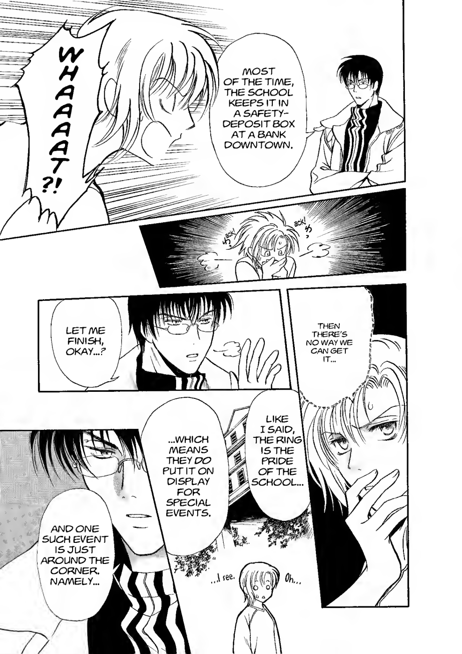

EVERY YEAR, WE AT THE SUIRYO FESTIVAL CAST LOTS TO SELECT THE BRIDE.
IT'S A CROSS BETWEEN A BEAUTY CONTEST AND A POPULARITY CONTEST.
You know how they pick a campus Queen at college? It's like that.
BUT THAT'S...
...HOLD IT!
I KNOW, I KNOW. WE'RE AN ALL-BOYS SCHOOL.
BUT WE STILL KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN.
BUT WHYYYYYYY?
AS I SAID, WE HAVE NO GIRLS.
SURELY THERE ARE *OTHER* FUN ACTIVITIES WE COULD DO!
AND MISS OUT ON HAVING A CAMPUS QUEEN? NO WAY.
あはーはーはーは
ah ha ha ha ha
THIS GOES TOO FAR!!
むキーッ
GROWL!

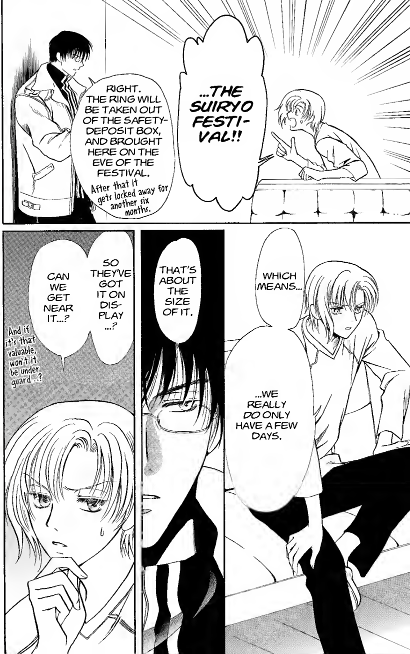

YOU'LL SEE...ONCE THE BRIDE IS CHOSEN AND THE CEREMONY BEGINS...
IT TAKES MORE THAN A BRIDE TO MAKE A WEDDING...!
わ
wa--!
わ
wa--!
うき～っ
urgh!
HOW TRUE. AND SO...
コン
knock
コン
knock
...YES?
COME IN!
ガチャ
chak
OH...
...RIKUO!

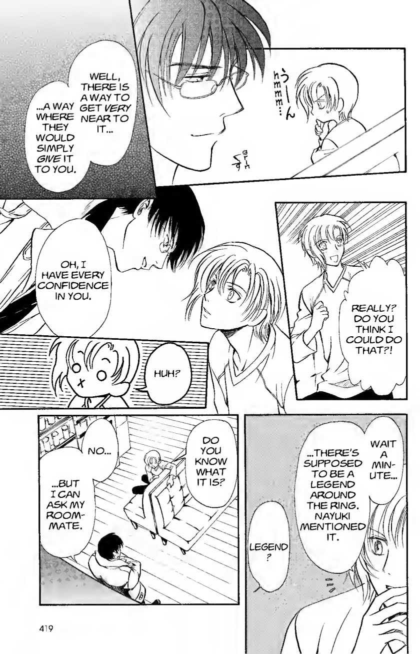

Urk!
I SEE YOU'RE ALREADY ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS.
きゃ clasp
ah あ ha は ha は ha は ha は は
UM...
...ER...
ぶん flap
ぶん flap
...NO WAY!
CAN WE TALK...?
OKAY...
...SURE.
Stay out as late as you like! I'll sign your name at curfew!

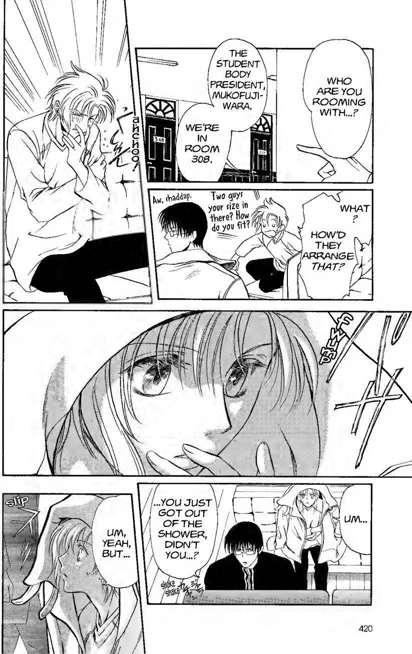

WELL, I GUESS I'D BETTER START CALLING *YOU* BY YOUR FIRST NAME...
...KAZAHAYA.
THAT WASN'T A MISTAKE! I DID IT ON PURPOSE!
WELL, WE'VE GOT LESS THAN A WEEK LEFT HERE.
WHO CARES IF PEOPLE FIGURE OUT THAT WE KNOW EACH OTHER...?
HUH?
WHY'S THAT...?
I DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE UP AGAINST A DEADLINE...

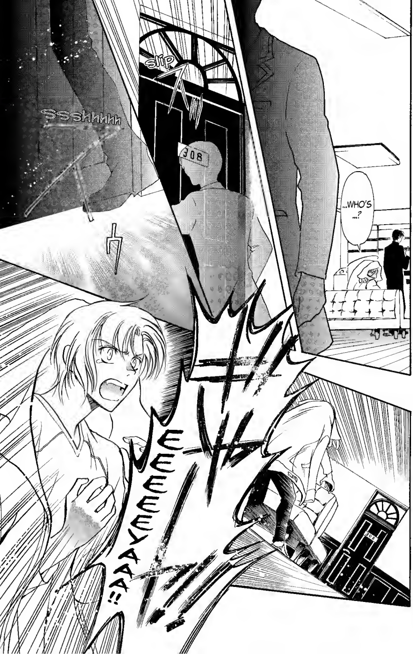

WE WEREN'T GIVEN A DEADLINE GOING INTO THIS...
IT TURNS OUT THAT ONCE THE FESTIVAL IS OVER, THE THING WE'RE LOOKING FOR WILL BE GONE. ...BUT NOW WE'VE GOT ONE ANYWAY.
YOU MEAN THE *RING*...?
YEAH.
YOU HEARD WHAT KAKEI SAID. IT'S A COVETED ITEM HERE AT SUIRYO, RIGHT? IT'S LIKE THEIR TREASURE.
SURE.
I DON'T KNOW WHY. MAYBE IT WAS DESIGNED BY A FAMOUS JEWELER OR SOMETHING.
WHATEVER THE CASE, THE GEM IN THE RING IS WORTH A LOT.


MOST OF THE TIME, THE SCHOOL KEEPS IT IN A SAFETY-DEPOSIT BOX AT A BANK DOWNTOWN.
WHAAAAAT?!
ack!
ack!
THEN THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN GET IT...
LET ME FINISH, OKAY...?
LIKE I SAID, THE RING IS THE PRIDE OF THE SCHOOL...
...WHICH MEANS THEY *DO* PUT IT ON DISPLAY FOR SPECIAL EVENTS.
Oh...
...I see.
AND ONE SUCH EVENT IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. NAMELY...


...THE SUIRYO FESTIVAL!!
RIGHT. THE RING WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF THE SAFETY-DEPOSIT BOX, AND BROUGHT HERE ON THE EVE OF THE FESTIVAL. After that it gets locked away for another six months.
WHICH MEANS...
...WE REALLY DO ONLY HAVE A FEW DAYS.
THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.
SO THEY'VE GOT IT ON DISPLAY...?
CAN WE GET NEAR IT...?
And if it's that valuable, won't it be under guard..?


うーん hmmm...
WELL, THERE IS A WAY TO GET *VERY* NEAR TO IT...
...A WAY WHERE THEY WOULD SIMPLY *GIVE* IT TO YOU.
grin
REALLY? DO YOU THINK I COULD DO THAT?!
OH, I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE IN YOU.
HUH?
WAIT A MINUTE...
...THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A LEGEND AROUND THE RING. NAYUKI MENTIONED IT.
LEGEND?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS?
NO...
...BUT I CAN ASK MY ROOMMATE.


WHO ARE YOU ROOMING WITH...?
THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT, MUKOFUJIWARA.
WE'RE IN ROOM 308.
308
310
achoo!
WHAT? HOW'D THEY ARRANGE THAT?
Two guys your size in there? How do you fit?
Aw, shaddap.
FWUP
UM...
...YOU JUST GOT OUT OF THE SHOWER, DIDN'T YOU...?
shake shake
slip
UM, YEAH, BUT...


...WHO'S
...?
slip
308
SSShhhhh
ウ
EEEEEEYAAA!!
308

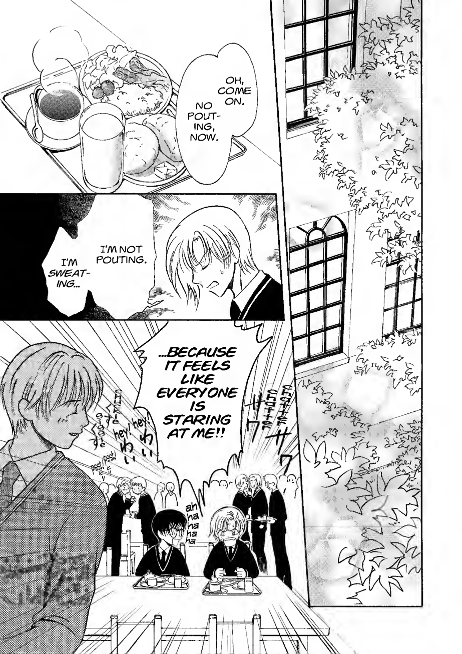
LEGAL DRUG

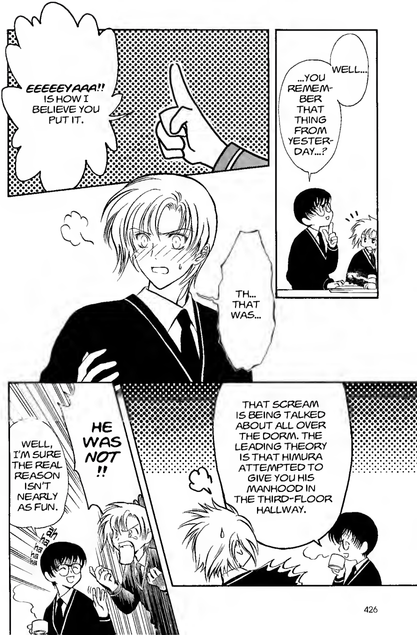
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
YO
TAZAWA

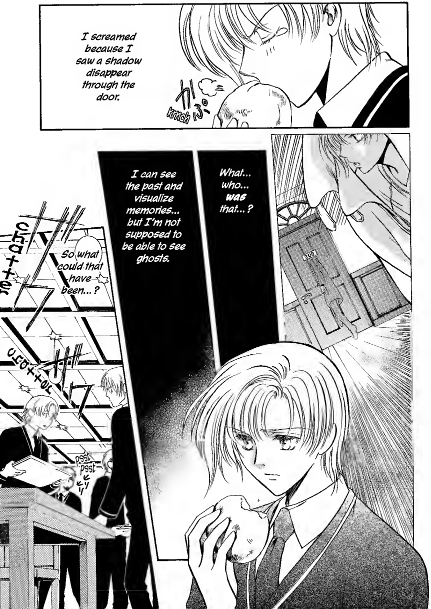
LEGAL DRUG

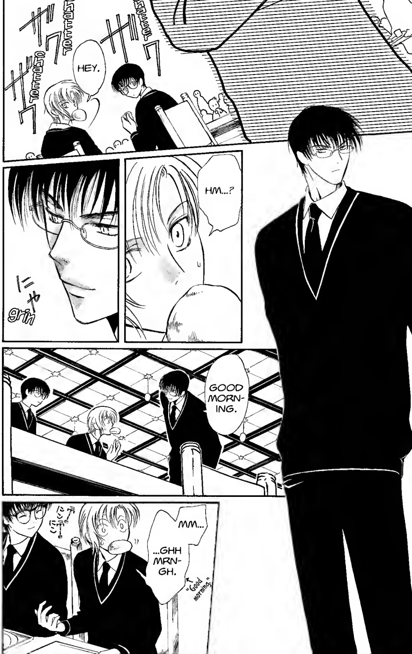
DRUG NO.14

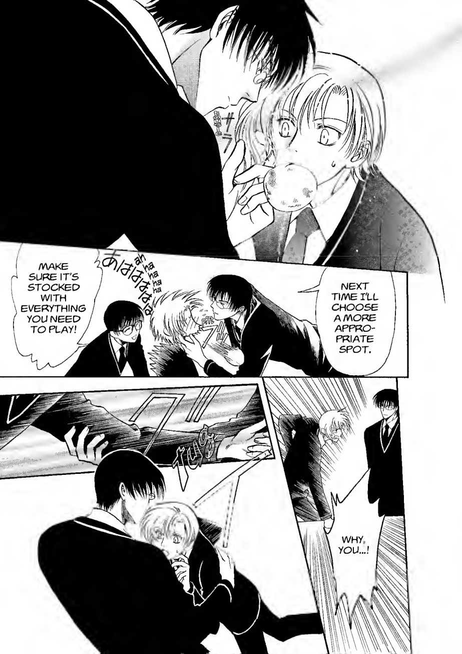
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

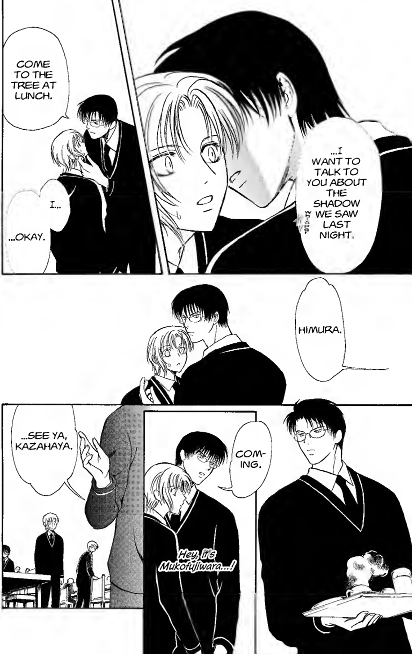

OH, COME ON. NO POUTING, NOW.
I'M NOT POUTING.
I'M SWEATING...
...BECAUSE IT FEELS LIKE EVERYONE IS STARING AT ME!!
chatter ザワ
chatter ザワ
hey! わい
hey! わい
chuckle くす
giggle くす
psst! psst!
ah ha ha ha ha

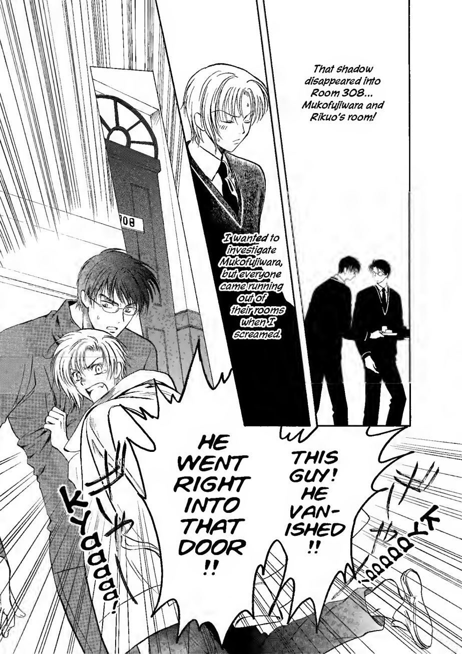

WELL...
...YOU REMEMBER THAT THING FROM YESTERDAY...?
EEEEEYAAA!! IS HOW I BELIEVE YOU PUT IT.
TH... THAT WAS...
THAT SCREAM IS BEING TALKED ABOUT ALL OVER THE DORM. THE LEADING THEORY IS THAT HIMURA ATTEMPTED TO GIVE YOU HIS MANHOOD IN THE THIRD-FLOOR HALLWAY.
HE WAS NOT !!
WELL, I'M SURE THE REAL REASON ISN'T NEARLY AS FUN.
ah ha ha ha ha

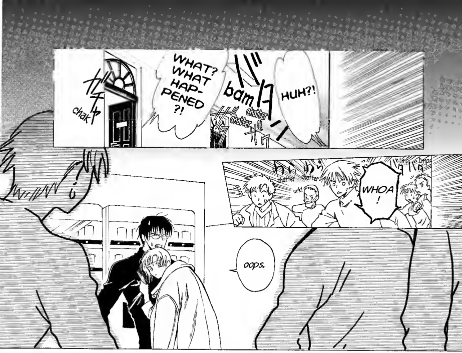

I screamed because I saw a shadow disappear through the door.
カリ
kmch
ふぅ
What... who... was that...?
308
I can see the past and visualize memories... but I'm not supposed to be able to see ghosts.
So what could that have been...?
chatter
chatter
psst psst
ヒソ

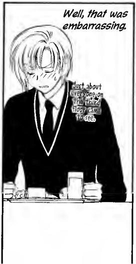

ザワ
chatter
ザワ
chatter
HEY.
HM...?
にや
grin
GOOD MORNING.
MM...
...GHH MRNGH.
"Good morning"
にこにこ
smile

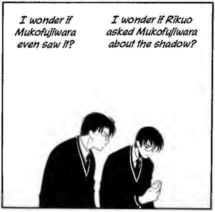

ザラ
tousle
NEXT TIME I'LL CHOOSE A MORE APPROPRIATE SPOT.
プッ
pfft
あははは
ah ha ha ha ha
MAKE SURE IT'S STOCKED WITH EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO PLAY!
WHY, YOU...!
グッ
tug

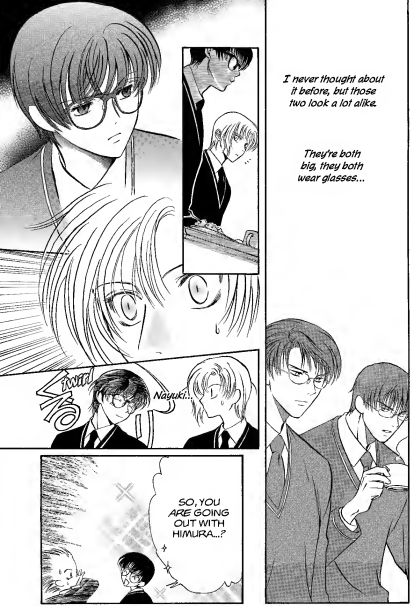

...I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE SHADOW WE SAW LAST NIGHT.
whisper
COME TO THE TREE AT LUNCH.
I...
...OKAY.
HIMURA.
COM-ING.
Hey, it's Mukofujiwara...!
...SEE YA, KAZAHAYA.

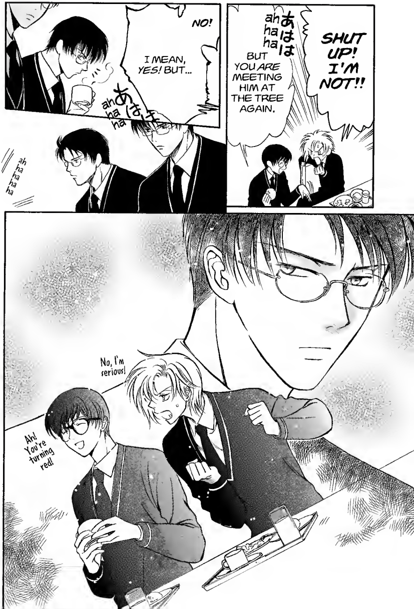

That shadow disappeared into Room 308... Mukofujiwara and Rikuo's room!
I wanted to investigate Mukofujiwara, but everyone came running out of their rooms when I screamed.
THIS GUY! HE VANISHED!!
HE WENT RIGHT INTO THAT DOOR!!
KYAAAAA!
KYAAAAA!

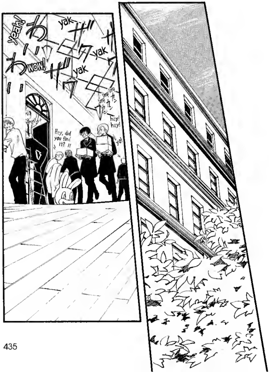

HUH?!
bam
chatter chatter
WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED ?!
chak
tmp tmp
WHOA !
chatter chatter
urk!
gasp!
oops.

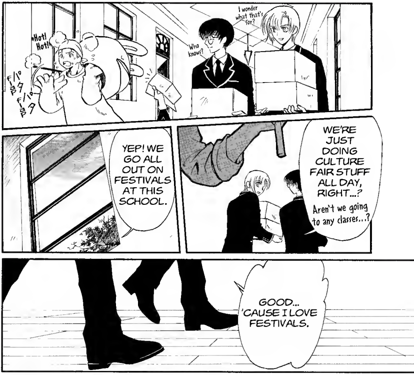

Well, that was embarrassing.
Just about everyone on the third floor came to see.

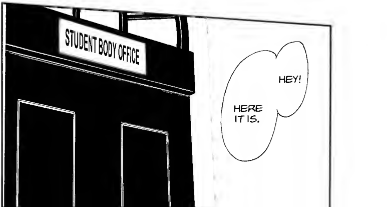

I wonder if Rikuo asked Mukofujiwara about the shadow?
I wonder if Mukofujiwara even saw it?

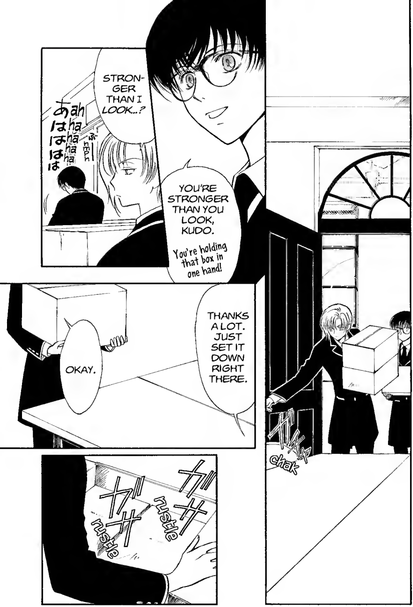

I never thought about it before, but those two look a lot alike.
They're both big, they both wear glasses...
...
twirl
Nayuki...
SO, YOU ARE GOING OUT WITH HIMURA...?


NO!
I MEAN, YES! BUT...
ah ha ha あはは
ah ha ha ha ha
ah ha ha あはは
BUT YOU ARE MEETING HIM AT THE TREE AGAIN.
SHUT UP! I'M NOT!!
No, I'm serious!
Ah! You're turning red!

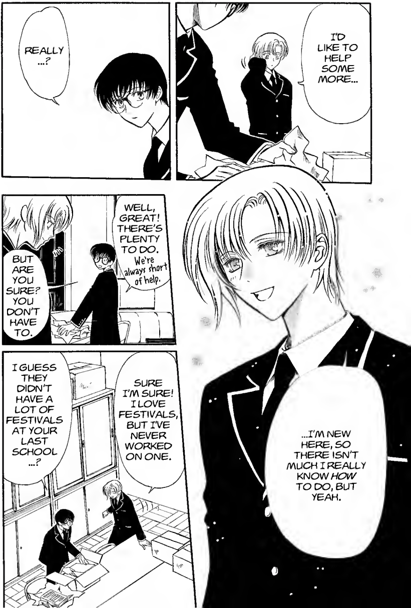

yak
yak
yak
hey! hey!
yo!
bmp bmp bmp
Hey, did you find it?
yeah!
wow!

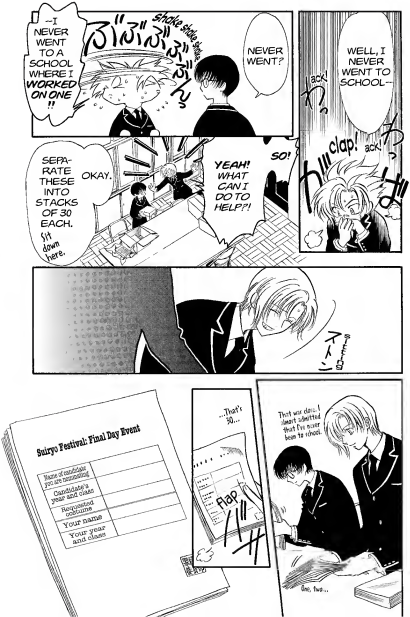

I wonder what that's for?
Who knows?
Hot! Hot!
パタ flap
パタ flap
WE'RE JUST DOING CULTURE FAIR STUFF ALL DAY, RIGHT...?
Aren't we going to any classes...?
YEP! WE GO ALL OUT ON FESTIVALS AT THIS SCHOOL.
GOOD... 'CAUSE I LOVE FESTIVALS.

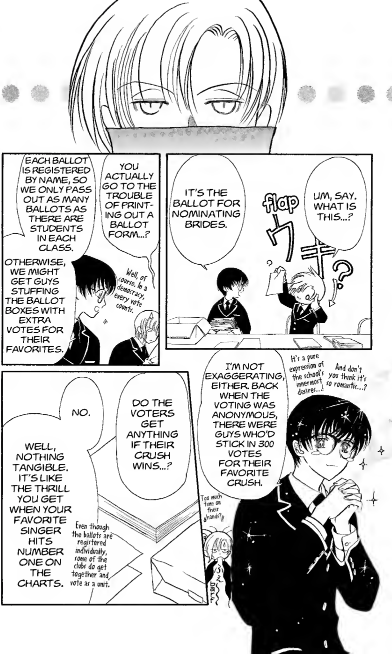

STUDENT BODY OFFICE
HEY!
HERE IT IS.

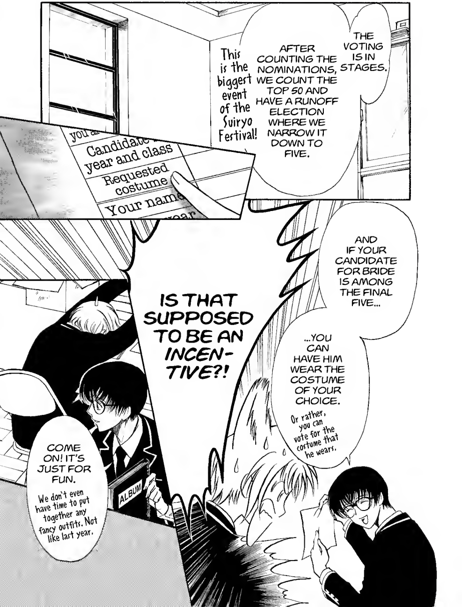


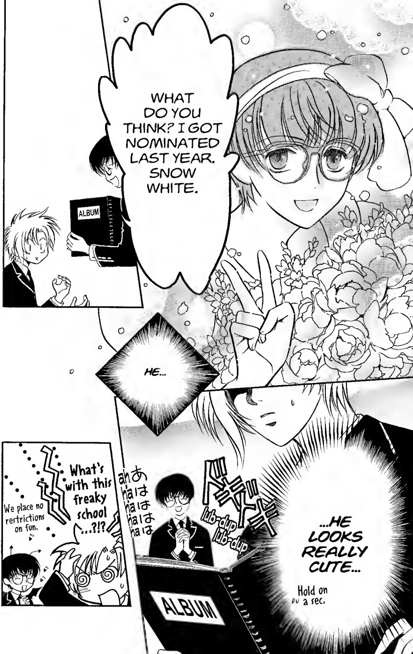
YOU'RE STRONGER THAN YOU LOOK, KUDO.
You're holding that box in one hand!
STRONGER THAN I LOOK...?
あはははは ah ha ha ha ha
ぶー hmph
ガチャ chak
THANKS A LOT. JUST SET IT DOWN RIGHT THERE.
OKAY.
ガサ rustle
ガサ rustle

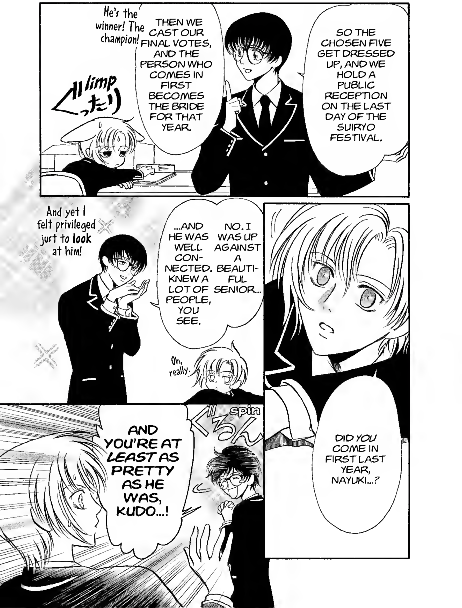

I'D LIKE TO HELP SOME MORE...
REALLY ...?
WELL, GREAT! THERE'S PLENTY TO DO. We're always short of help.
BUT ARE YOU SURE? YOU DON'T HAVE TO.
...I'M NEW HERE, SO THERE ISN'T MUCH I REALLY KNOW *HOW* TO DO, BUT YEAH.
SURE I'M SURE! I LOVE FESTIVALS, BUT I'VE NEVER WORKED ON ONE.
I GUESS THEY DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF FESTIVALS AT YOUR LAST SCHOOL ...?

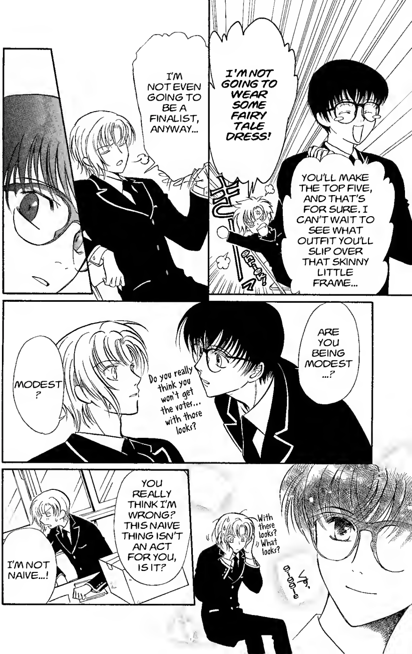

WELL, I NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL--
ack!
ack!
clap!
NEVER WENT?
shake shake shake
--I NEVER WENT TO A SCHOOL WHERE I **WORKED ON ONE** !!
SO!
YEAH! WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?!
OKAY.
SEPARATE THESE INTO STACKS OF 30 EACH. Sit down here.
sitting
That was close. I almost admitted that I've never been to school.
One, two...
...That's 30...
flap
Suiryo Festival: Final Day Event
Name of candidate you are nominating
Candidate's year and class
Requested costume
Your name
Your year and class

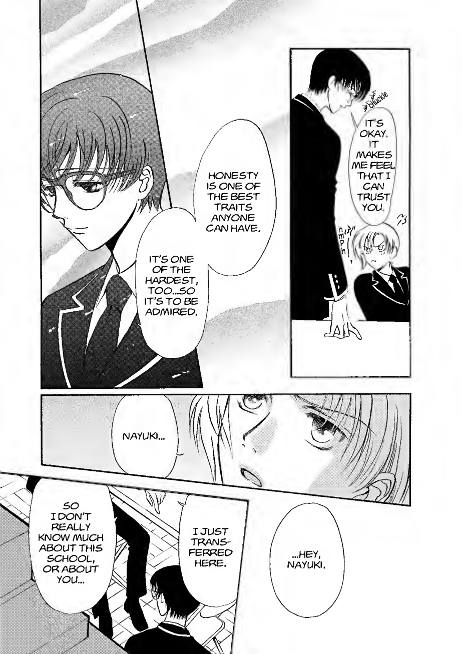

UM, SAY. WHAT IS THIS...?
flap
ウキ
IT'S THE BALLOT FOR NOMINATING BRIDES.
YOU ACTUALLY GO TO THE TROUBLE OF PRINTING OUT A BALLOT FORM...?
Well, of course. In a democracy, every vote counts.
EACH BALLOT IS REGISTERED BY NAME, SO WE ONLY PASS OUT AS MANY BALLOTS AS THERE ARE STUDENTS IN EACH CLASS.
OTHERWISE, WE MIGHT GET GUYS STUFFING THE BALLOT BOXES WITH EXTRA VOTES FOR THEIR FAVORITES.
I'M NOT EXAGGERATING, EITHER. BACK WHEN THE VOTING WAS ANONYMOUS, THERE WERE GUYS WHO'D STICK IN 300 VOTES FOR THEIR FAVORITE CRUSH.
It's a pure expression of the school's innermost desires...!
And don't you think it's so romantic...?
Too much time on their hands?
ふえ
barf
DO THE VOTERS GET ANYTHING IF THEIR CRUSH WINS...?
NO.
WELL, NOTHING TANGIBLE. IT'S LIKE THE THRILL YOU GET WHEN YOUR FAVORITE SINGER HITS NUMBER ONE ON THE CHARTS.
Even though the ballots are registered individually, some of the clubs do get together and vote as a unit.

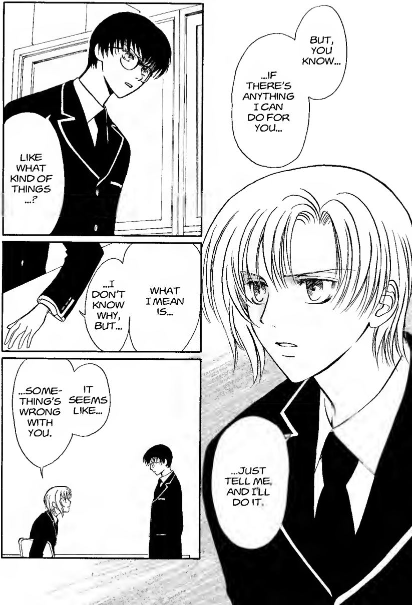

THE VOTING IS IN STAGES.
AFTER COUNTING THE NOMINATIONS, WE COUNT THE TOP 50 AND HAVE A RUNOFF ELECTION WHERE WE NARROW IT DOWN TO FIVE.
This is the biggest event of the Suiryo Festival!
Candidate year and class
Requested costume
Your name
AND IF YOUR CANDIDATE FOR BRIDE IS AMONG THE FINAL FIVE...
...YOU CAN HAVE HIM WEAR THE COSTUME OF YOUR CHOICE.
Or rather, you can vote for the costume that he wears.
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE AN INCENTIVE?!
COME ON! IT'S JUST FOR FUN.
We don't even have time to put together any fancy outfits. Not like last year.
ALBUM

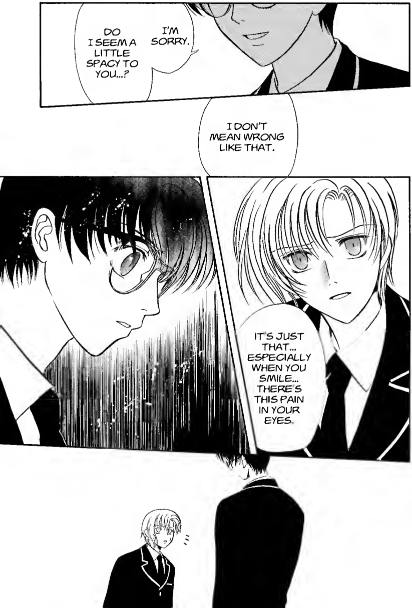

WHAT DO YOU THINK? I GOT NOMINATED LAST YEAR. SNOW WHITE.
ALBUM
HE...
...HE LOOKS REALLY CUTE...
Hold on a sec.
ドキドキ
lub-dup lub-dup
あ ah は ha は ha は ha
ALBUM
What's with this freaky school ...?!?
We place no restrictions on fun.

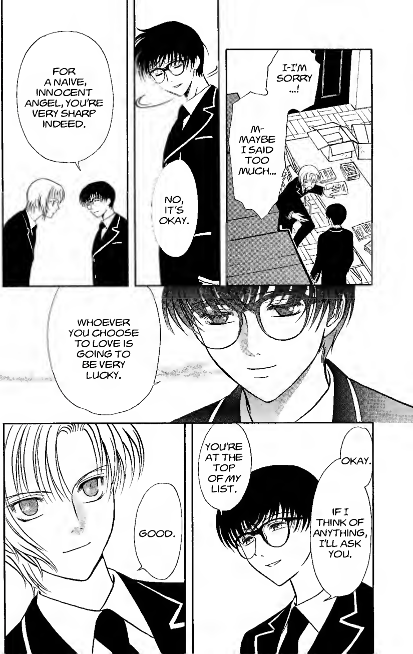

SO THE CHOSEN FIVE GET DRESSED UP, AND WE HOLD A PUBLIC RECEPTION ON THE LAST DAY OF THE SUIRYO FESTIVAL.
THEN WE CAST OUR FINAL VOTES, AND THE PERSON WHO COMES IN FIRST BECOMES THE BRIDE FOR THAT YEAR.
He's the winner! The champion!
limp くったり
DID *YOU* COME IN FIRST LAST YEAR, NAYUKI...?
NO. I WAS UP AGAINST A BEAUTIFUL SENIOR...
...AND HE WAS WELL CONNECTED. KNEW A LOT OF PEOPLE, YOU SEE.
And yet I felt privileged just to look at him!
Oh, really.
spin くるん
AND YOU'RE AT *LEAST* AS PRETTY AS HE WAS, KUDO...!

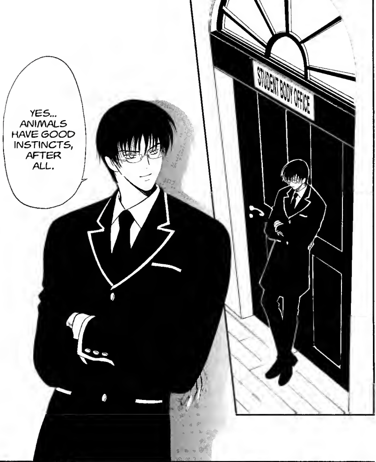

I'M NOT GOING TO WEAR SOME FAIRY TALE DRESS!
YOU'LL MAKE THE TOP FIVE, AND THAT'S FOR SURE. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT OUTFIT YOU'LL SLIP OVER THAT SKINNY LITTLE FRAME...
I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO BE A FINALIST, ANYWAY...
ARE YOU BEING MODEST ...?
Do you really think you won't get the voters... with those looks?
MODEST?
くす
giggle
With these looks? What looks?
YOU REALLY THINK I'M WRONG? THIS NAIVE THING ISN'T AN ACT FOR YOU, IS IT?
I'M NOT NAIVE...!

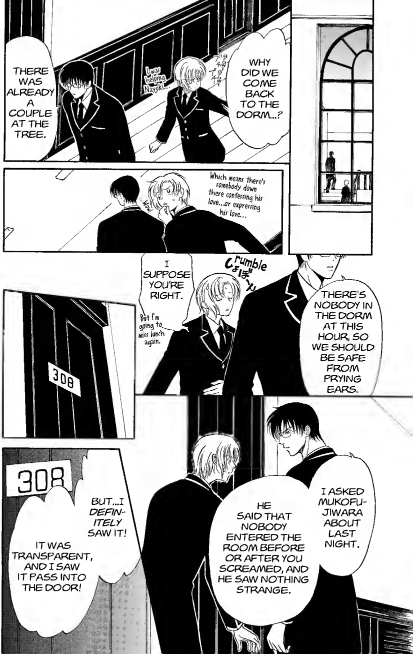

すくすくすく chuckle
IT'S OKAY. IT MAKES ME FEEL THAT I CAN TRUST YOU.
ふん" hmph
HONESTY IS ONE OF THE BEST TRAITS ANYONE CAN HAVE.
IT'S ONE OF THE HARDEST, TOO...SO IT'S TO BE ADMIRED.
NAYUKI...
...HEY, NAYUKI.
I JUST TRANSFERRED HERE.
SO I DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS SCHOOL, OR ABOUT YOU...

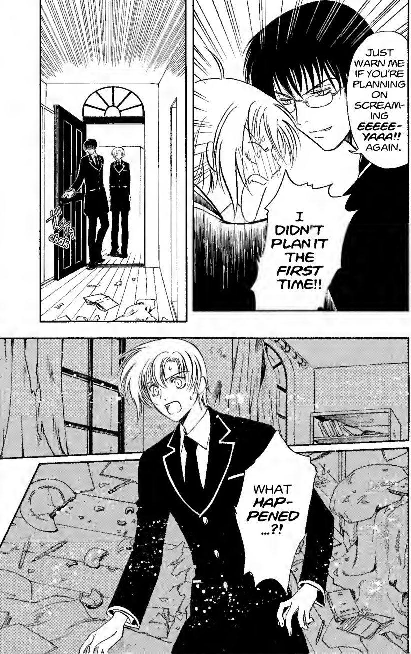

BUT, YOU KNOW...
...IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU...
LIKE WHAT KIND OF THINGS ...?
WHAT I MEAN IS...
...I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...
IT SEEMS LIKE...
...SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH YOU.
...JUST TELL ME, AND I'LL DO IT.

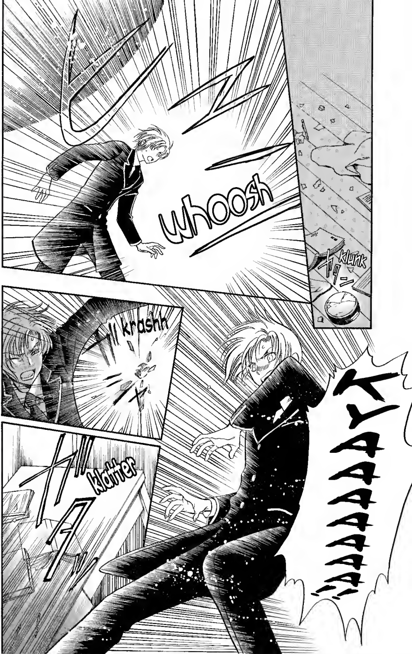

I'M SORRY.
DO I SEEM A LITTLE SPACY TO YOU...?
I DON'T MEAN WRONG LIKE THAT.
IT'S JUST THAT... ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU SMILE... THERE'S THIS PAIN IN YOUR EYES.

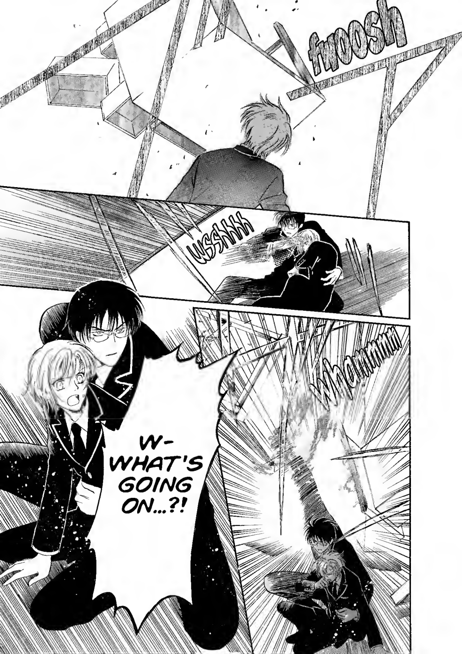

I-I'M SORRY ...!
M-MAYBE I SAID TOO MUCH...
NO, IT'S OKAY.
FOR A NAIVE, INNOCENT ANGEL, YOU'RE VERY SHARP INDEED.
WHOEVER YOU CHOOSE TO LOVE IS GOING TO BE VERY LUCKY.
OKAY.
IF I THINK OF ANYTHING, I'LL ASK YOU.
YOU'RE AT THE TOP OF MY LIST.
GOOD.


YES... ANIMALS HAVE GOOD INSTINCTS, AFTER ALL.
STUDENT BODY OFFICE


WHY DID WE COME BACK TO THE DORM...?
プイ
プチ
I was helping Nayuki...
THERE WAS ALREADY A COUPLE AT THE TREE.
Which means there's somebody down there confessing his love...or expressing his love...
Wow
THERE'S NOBODY IN THE DORM AT THIS HOUR, SO WE SHOULD BE SAFE FROM PRYING EARS.
しょぼーん
rumble
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT.
But I'm going to miss lunch again.
308
I ASKED MUKOFUJIWARA ABOUT LAST NIGHT.
HE SAID THAT NOBODY ENTERED THE ROOM BEFORE OR AFTER YOU SCREAMED, AND HE SAW NOTHING STRANGE.
BUT...I DEFINITELY SAW IT!
IT WAS TRANSPARENT, AND I SAW IT PASS INTO THE DOOR!
308


JUST WARN ME IF YOU'RE PLANNING ON SCREAMING ***EEEEE-YAAA!!*** AGAIN.
I DIDN'T PLAN IT THE ***FIRST*** TIME!!
ガチャ
chak
WHAT ***HAPPENED***...?!

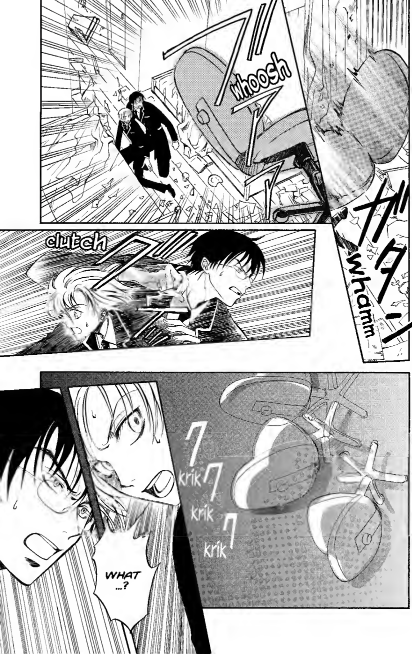

klunk
whoosh
krashh
KYAAAAAAA!!
klatter

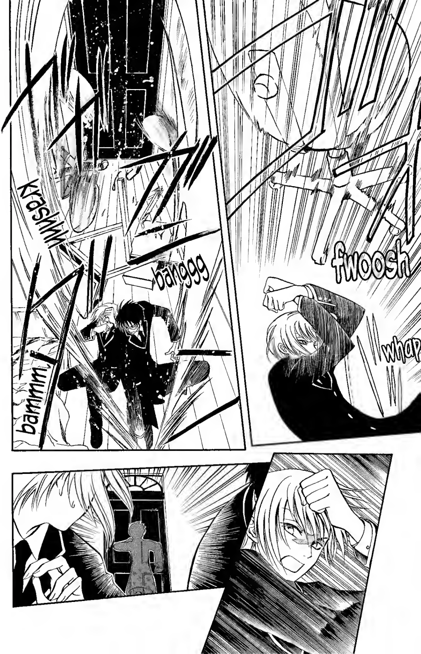

fwoosh
wsshhhh
whammmm
W-WHAT'S GOING ON...?!

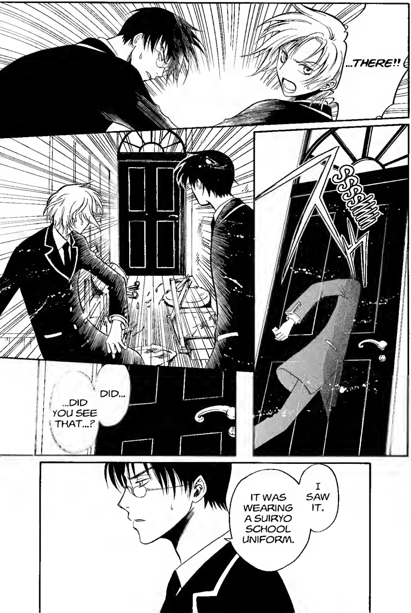
LEGAL DRUG

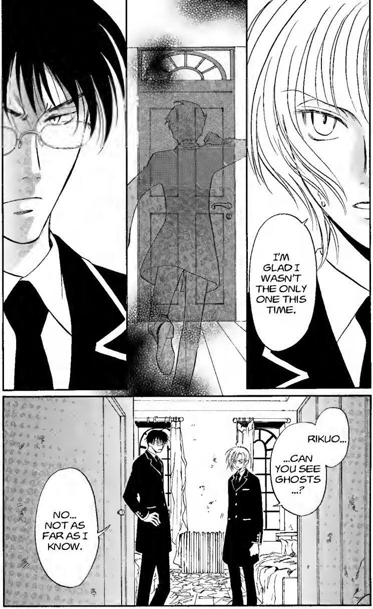
DRUG NO.15

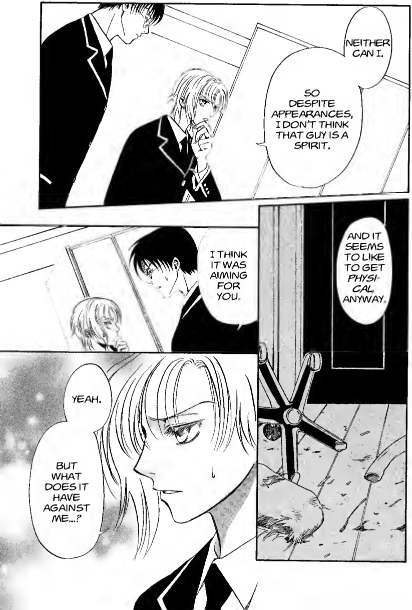
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

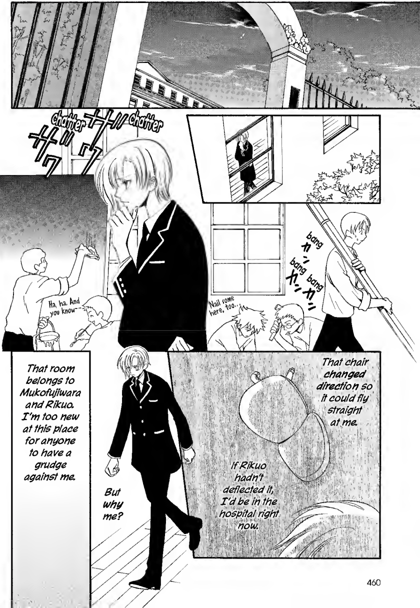

whoosh
ガタン
wham
clutch
krik
krik
krik
WHAT ...?

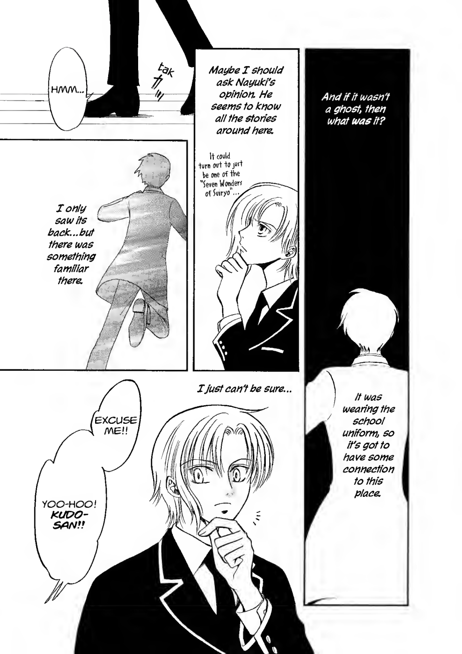

fwoosh
whap
krashhh
banggg
bammm

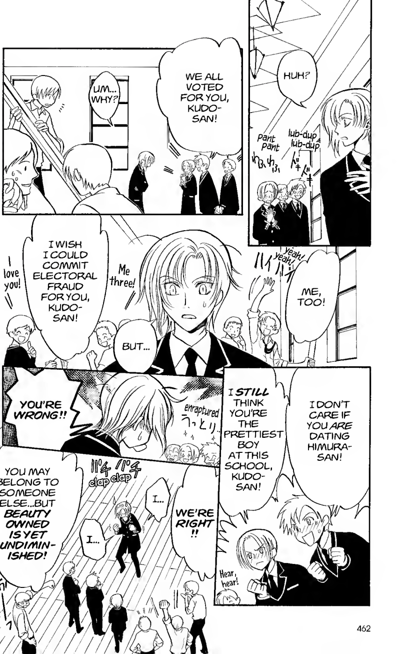

...THERE!!
SSSWWW
DID...
...DID YOU SEE THAT...?
I SAW IT.
IT WAS WEARING A SUIRYO SCHOOL UNIFORM.

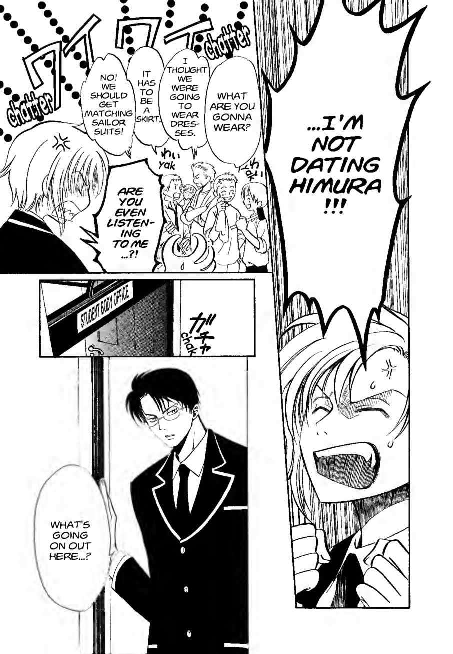

I'M GLAD I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE THIS TIME.
RIKUO...
...CAN YOU SEE GHOSTS ...?
NO... NOT AS FAR AS I KNOW.

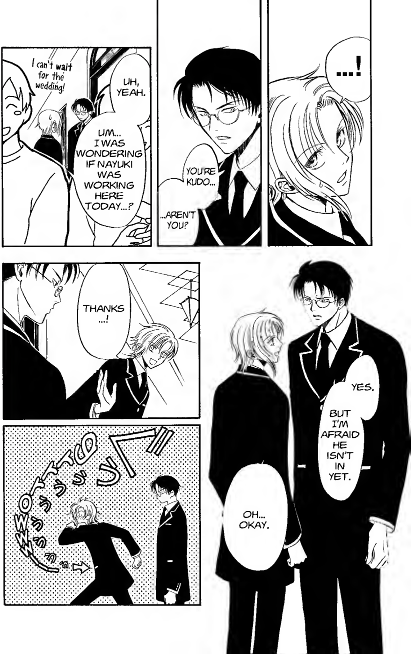

NEITHER CAN I.
SO DESPITE APPEARANCES, I DON'T THINK THAT GUY IS A SPIRIT.
AND IT SEEMS TO LIKE TO GET *PHYSICAL* ANYWAY.
I THINK IT WAS AIMING FOR YOU.
YEAH.
BUT WHAT DOES IT HAVE AGAINST ME...?

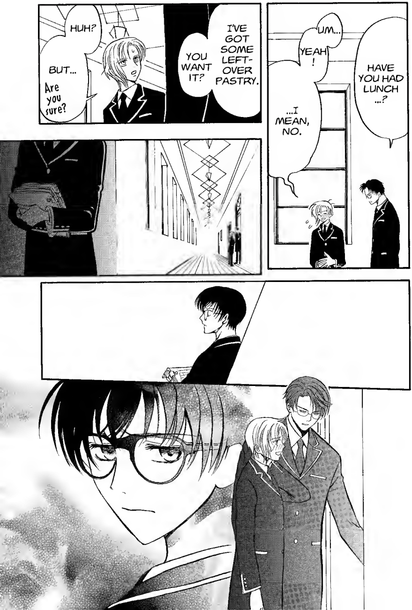

chatter
chatter
Ha, ha. And you know~
Nail some here, too...
bang
bang
bang
That chair changed direction so it could fly straight at me.
If Rikuo hadn't deflected it, I'd be in the hospital right now.
That room belongs to Mukofujiwara and Rikuo. I'm too new at this place for anyone to have a grudge against me.
But why me?

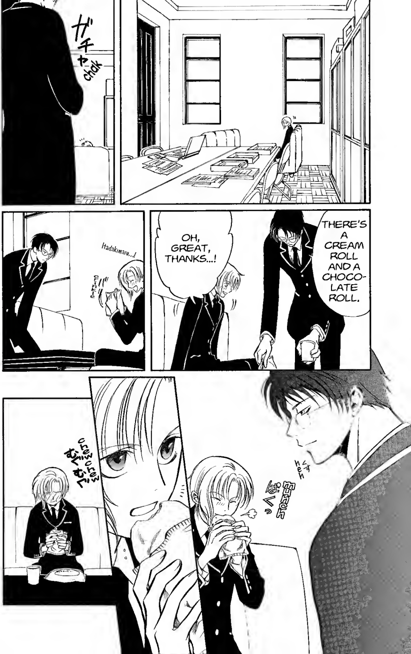

HMM...
tak
And if it wasn't a ghost, then what was it?
It was wearing the school uniform, so it's got to have some connection to this place.
Maybe I should ask Nayuki's opinion. He seems to know all the stories around here.
It could turn out to just be one of the "Seven Wonders of Suiryo"...
I only saw its back...but there was something familiar there.
I just can't be sure...
EXCUSE ME!!
YOO-HOO! KUDO-SAN!!

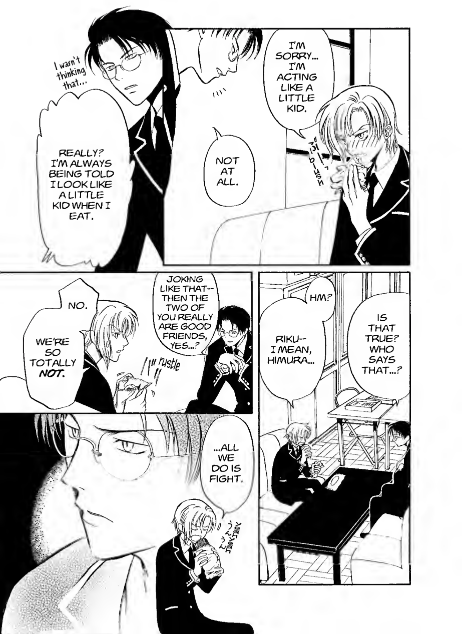

HUH?
lub-dup lub-dup
ドキドキ
Pant pant
わふわふ
WE ALL VOTED FOR YOU, KUDO-SAN!
UM... WHY?
ME, TOO!
yeah! yeah!
ハイハイ
Me three!
I WISH I COULD COMMIT ELECTORAL FRAUD FOR YOU, KUDO-SAN!
I love you!
BUT...
I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE DATING HIMURA-SAN!
I STILL THINK YOU'RE THE PRETTIEST BOY AT THIS SCHOOL, KUDO-SAN!
enraptured
うっとり
YOU'RE WRONG!!
Hear, hear!
WE'RE RIGHT!!
I...
I...
clap clap
パチパチ
YOU MAY BELONG TO SOMEONE ELSE...BUT BEAUTY OWNED IS YET UNDIMINISHED!
YUP!
おー

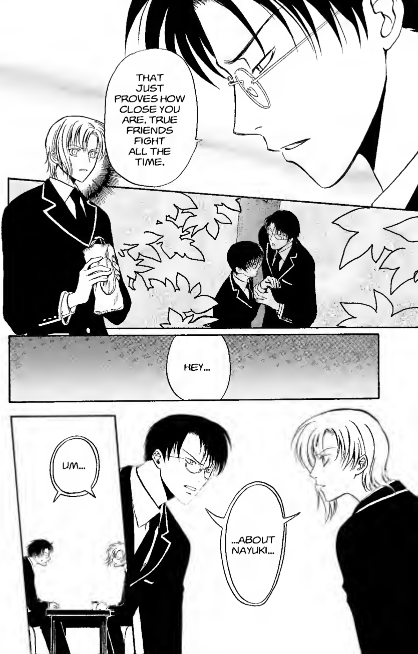

ワイワイ
chatter
chatter
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA WEAR?
I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO WEAR DRESSES.
IT HAS TO BE A SKIRT.
NO! WE SHOULD GET MATCHING SAILOR SUITS!
yak
yak
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME...?!
...I'M NOT DATING HIMURA!!!
STUDENT BODY OFFICE
ガチャ
chak
WHAT'S GOING ON OUT HERE...?

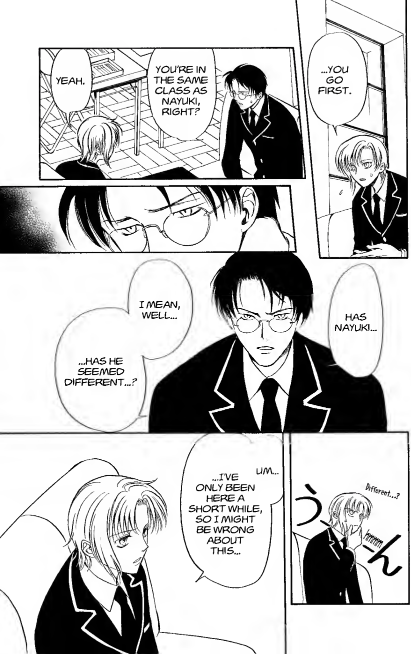

I can't wait for the wedding!
UH, YEAH.
UM... I WAS WONDERING IF NAYUKI WAS WORKING HERE TODAY...?
YOU'RE KUDO...
...AREN'T YOU?
...!
YES.
BUT I'M AFRAID HE ISN'T IN YET.
OH... OKAY.
THANKS ...!
WWWO
ううううううッ

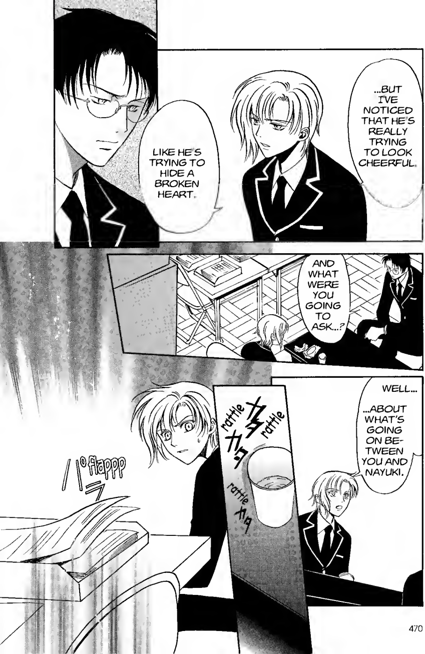

HAVE YOU HAD LUNCH ...?
UM...
YEAH!
...I MEAN, NO.
I'VE GOT SOME LEFT-OVER PASTRY.
YOU WANT IT?
HUH?
BUT...
Are you sure?

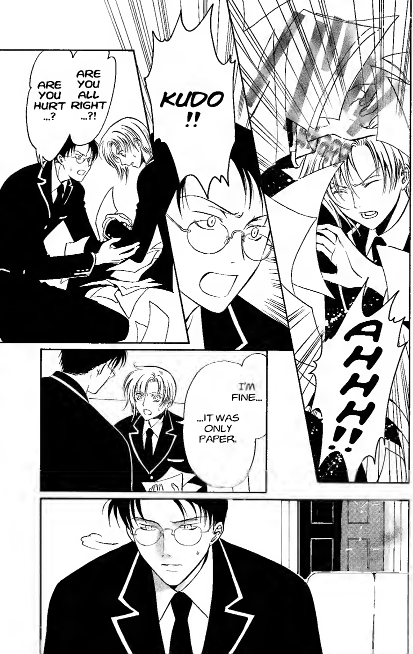

ガチャ
chak
THERE'S A CREAM ROLL AND A CHOCOLATE ROLL.
OH, GREAT, THANKS...!
Itadakimasu...!
crinkle
くす
heh
ぱくっ
munch
むぐむぐ
chew chew

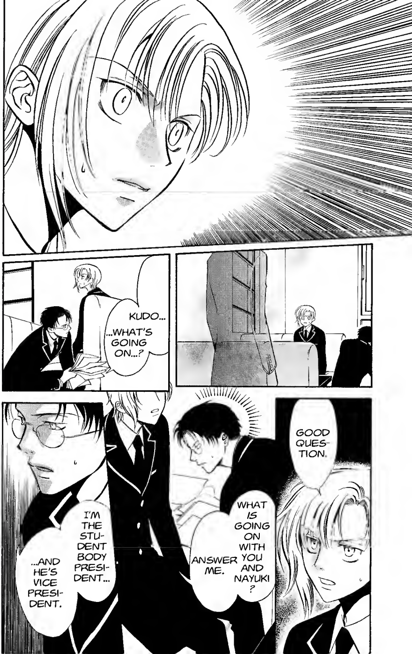

I'M SORRY... I'M ACTING LIKE A LITTLE KID.
ぶーっ
blush
NOT AT ALL.
REALLY? I'M ALWAYS BEING TOLD I LOOK LIKE A LITTLE KID WHEN I EAT.
I wasn't thinking that...
HM?
IS THAT TRUE? WHO SAYS THAT...?
RIKU-- I MEAN, HIMURA...
JOKING LIKE THAT-- THEN THE TWO OF YOU REALLY ARE GOOD FRIENDS, YES...?
NO.
WE'RE SO TOTALLY ***NOT***.
rustle
...ALL WE DO IS FIGHT.
うんうん
nod nod

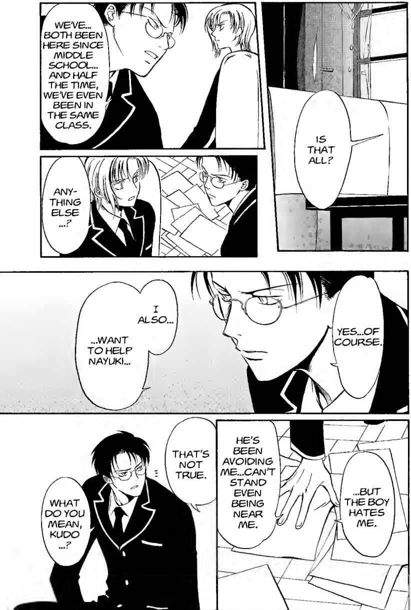

THAT JUST PROVES HOW CLOSE YOU ARE. TRUE FRIENDS FIGHT ALL THE TIME.
HEY...
UM...
...ABOUT NAYUKI...

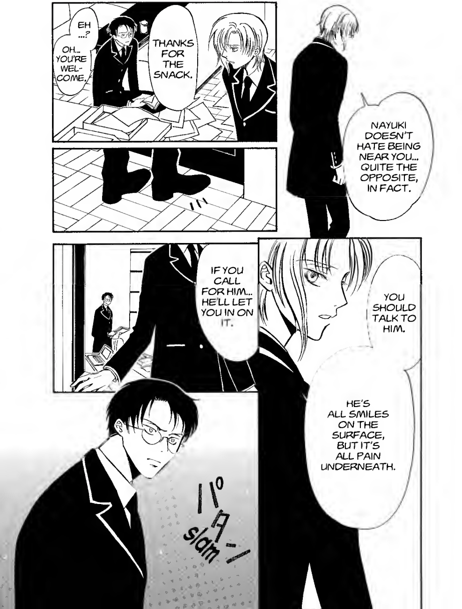

...YOU GO FIRST.
YOU'RE IN THE SAME CLASS AS NAYUKI, RIGHT?
YEAH.
HAS NAYUKI...
I MEAN, WELL...
...HAS HE SEEMED DIFFERENT...?
Different...?
う～ん
hmmm
UM...
...I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE A SHORT WHILE, SO I MIGHT BE WRONG ABOUT THIS...

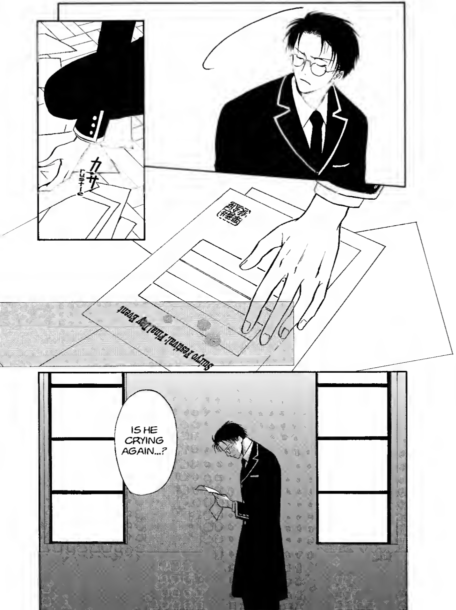

...BUT I'VE NOTICED THAT HE'S REALLY TRYING TO LOOK CHEERFUL.
LIKE HE'S TRYING TO HIDE A BROKEN HEART.
AND WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO ASK...?
WELL...
...ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON BE-TWEEN YOU AND NAYUKI.
カタ rattle rattle
カタ rattle
パラ flappp

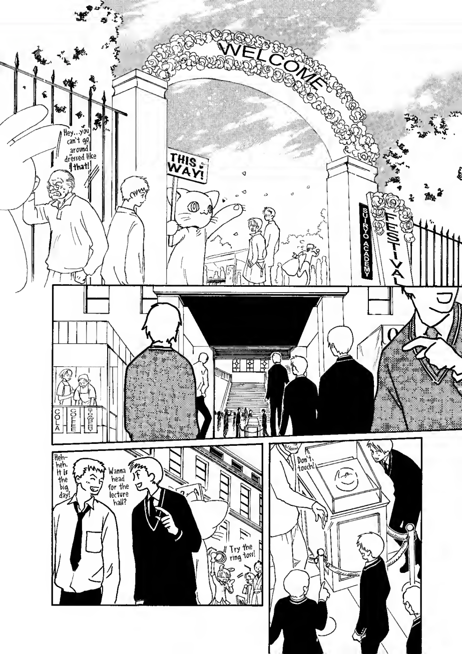

AHHHH!!
KUDO!!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ...?!
ARE YOU HURT ...?
I'M FINE... ...IT WAS ONLY PAPER.

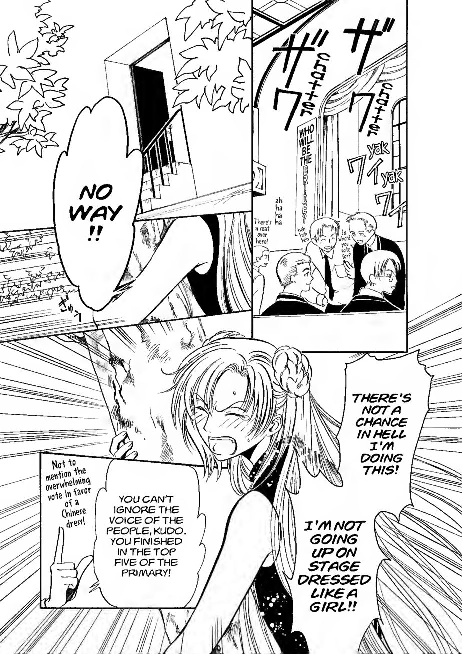

KUDO... ...WHAT'S GOING ON...?
GOOD QUESTION.
WHAT IS GOING ON WITH YOU AND NAYUKI?
ANSWER ME.
I'M THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT...
...AND HE'S VICE PRESIDENT.

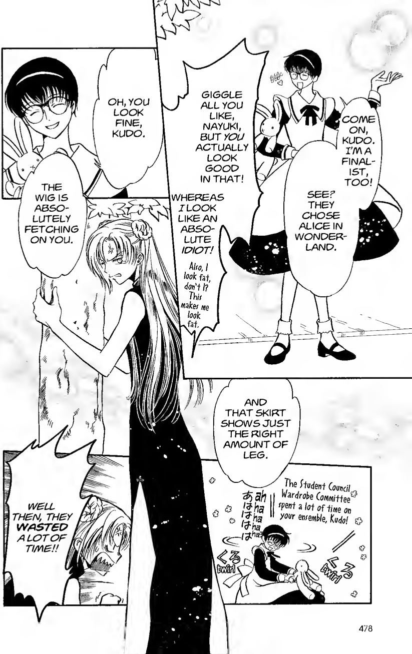

WE'VE... BOTH BEEN HERE SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL... AND HALF THE TIME, WE'VE EVEN BEEN IN THE SAME CLASS.
IS THAT ALL?
ANYTHING ELSE ...?
YES...OF COURSE.
I ALSO...
...WANT TO HELP NAYUKI...
...BUT THE BOY HATES ME.
HE'S BEEN AVOIDING ME...CAN'T STAND EVEN BEING NEAR ME.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, KUDO ...?

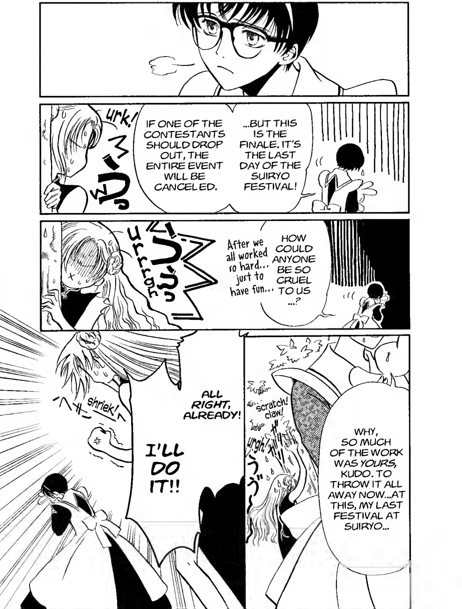

THANKS FOR THE SNACK.
EH ...?
OH... YOU'RE WELCOME.
NAYUKI DOESN'T HATE BEING NEAR YOU... QUITE THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT.
YOU SHOULD TALK TO HIM.
HE'S ALL SMILES ON THE SURFACE, BUT IT'S ALL PAIN UNDERNEATH.
IF YOU CALL FOR HIM... HE'LL LET YOU IN ON IT.
パタン
slam

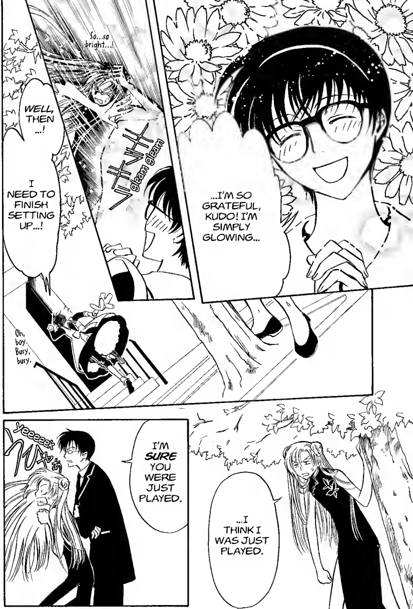

カサ
rustle
Suiryo Festival, Final Day Event
IS HE CRYING AGAIN...?

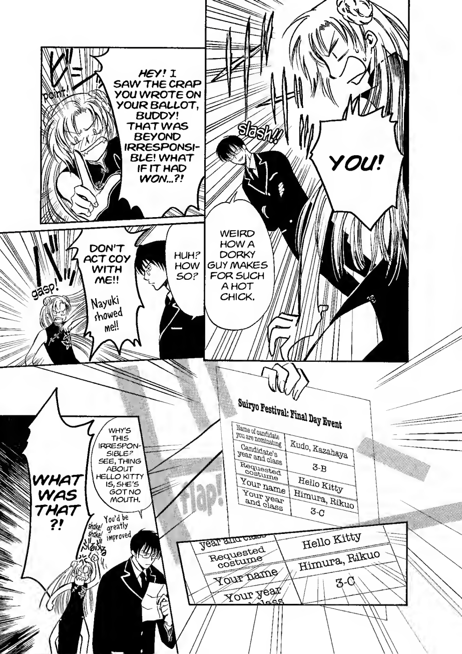

WELCOME
SUIRYO ACADEMY
FESTIVAL
THIS WAY!
Hey...you can't go around dressed like that!
COLA
COFFEE
STRAWBERRY
Don't touch!
Wanna head for the lecture hall?
Heh-heh. It is the big day!
Try the ring toss!


ザワ chatter
ザワ chatter
ワイ yak
ワイ yak
WHO WILL BE THE BRIDE?
ah ha ha ha
heh heh heh
So who'd you vote for?
There's a seat over here!
NO WAY!!
ぎゅっ
THERE'S NOT A CHANCE IN HELL I'M DOING THIS!
I'M NOT GOING UP ON STAGE DRESSED LIKE A GIRL!!
YOU CAN'T IGNORE THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, KUDO. YOU FINISHED IN THE TOP FIVE OF THE PRIMARY!
Not to mention the overwhelming vote in favor of a Chinese dress!


giggle
COME ON, KUDO. I'M A FINALIST, TOO!
SEE? THEY CHOSE ALICE IN WONDERLAND.
GIGGLE ALL YOU LIKE, NAYUKI, BUT *YOU* ACTUALLY LOOK GOOD IN THAT!
WHEREAS *I* LOOK LIKE AN ABSOLUTE *IDIOT!*
Also, I look fat, don't I? This makes me look fat.
OH, YOU LOOK FINE, KUDO.
THE WIG IS ABSOLUTELY FETCHING ON YOU.
AND THAT SKIRT SHOWS JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF LEG.
The Student Council Wardrobe Committee spent a lot of time on your ensemble, Kudo!
あははは ah ha ha ha
くる twirl
くる twirl
WELL THEN, THEY **WASTED** A LOT OF TIME!!

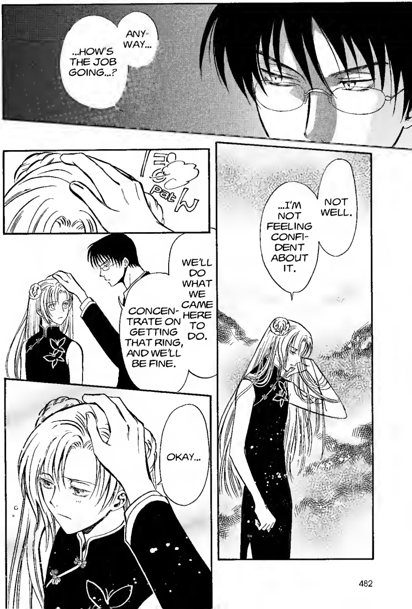

...BUT THIS IS THE FINALE. IT'S THE LAST DAY OF THE SUIRYO FESTIVAL!
IF ONE OF THE CONTESTANTS SHOULD DROP OUT, THE ENTIRE EVENT WILL BE CANCELED.
urk!
HOW COULD ANYONE BE SO CRUEL TO US ...?
After we all worked so hard... just to have fun...
urrrgh
WHY, SO MUCH OF THE WORK WAS *YOURS*, KUDO. TO THROW IT ALL AWAY NOW...AT THIS, MY LAST FESTIVAL AT SUIRYO...
scratch!
claw!
urgh!
ALL RIGHT, ALREADY!
I'LL DO IT!!
shriek!

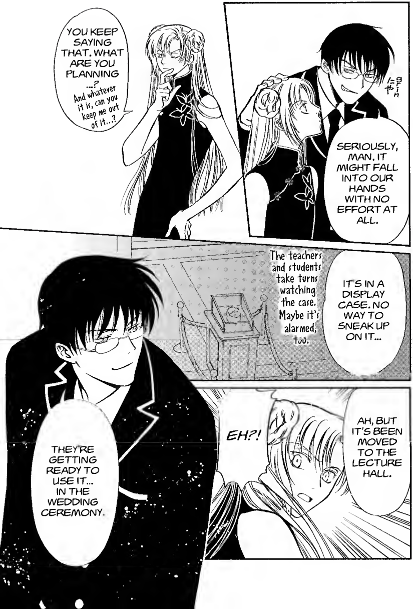

...I'M SO GRATEFUL, KUDO! I'M SIMPLY GLOWING...
So...so bright...!
gleam gleam
WELL, THEN ...!
I NEED TO FINISH SETTING UP...!
Oh, boy. Busy, busy.
...I THINK I WAS JUST PLAYED.
I'M **SURE** YOU WERE JUST PLAYED.
Yeeeeek
ひゃあ


YOU!
slash!!
WEIRD HOW A DORKY GUY MAKES FOR SUCH A HOT CHICK.
point!
HEY! I SAW THE CRAP YOU WROTE ON YOUR BALLOT, BUDDY! THAT WAS BEYOND IRRESPONSIBLE! WHAT IF IT HAD WON...?!
HUH? HOW SO?
DON'T ACT COY WITH ME!!
gasp!
Nayuki showed me!!
flap!
WHY'S THIS IRRESPONSIBLE? SEE, THING ABOUT HELLO KITTY IS, SHE'S GOT NO MOUTH.
You'd be greatly improved
WHAT WAS THAT?!
shake! shake!

Suiryo Festival: Final Day Event

Name of candidate you are nominating	Kudo, Kazahaya
Candidate's year and class	3-B
Requested costume	Hello Kitty
Your name	Himura, Rikuo
Your year and class	3-C

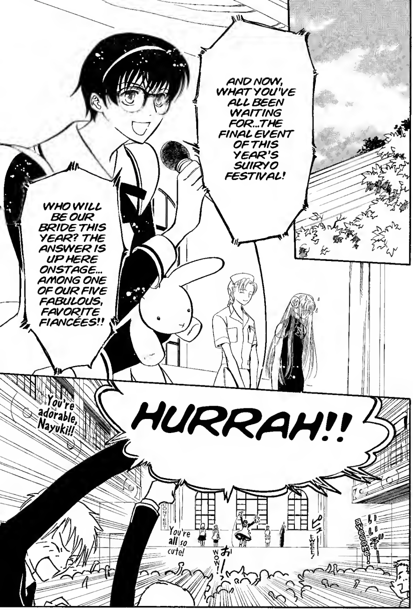

ANY-WAY...
...HOW'S THE JOB GOING...?
NOT WELL.
...I'M NOT FEELING CONFIDENT ABOUT IT.
ぽん
pat
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAME HERE TO DO.
CONCENTRATE ON GETTING THAT RING, AND WE'LL BE FINE.
OKAY...

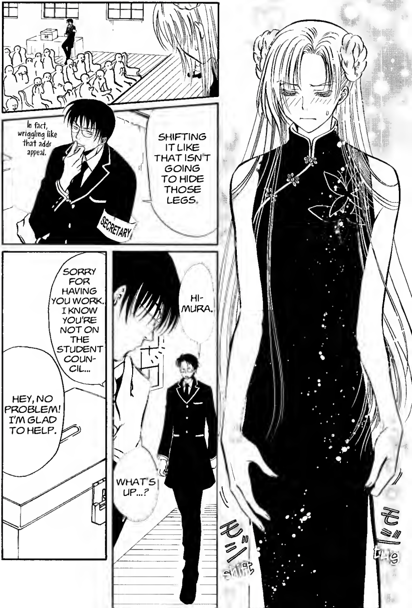

にや grin
SERIOUSLY, MAN. IT MIGHT FALL INTO OUR HANDS WITH NO EFFORT AT ALL.
YOU KEEP SAYING THAT. WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING ...?
And whatever it is, can you keep me out of it...?
IT'S IN A DISPLAY CASE. NO WAY TO SNEAK UP ON IT...
The teachers and students take turns watching the case. Maybe it's alarmed, too.
AH, BUT IT'S BEEN MOVED TO THE LECTURE HALL.
EH?!
THEY'RE GETTING READY TO USE IT... IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY.

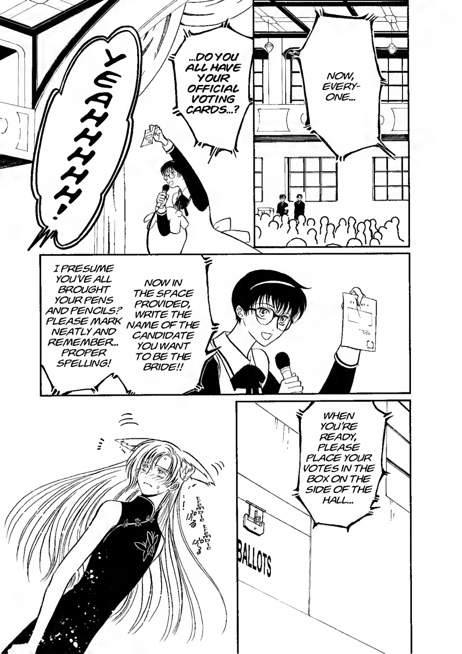
LEGAL DRUG

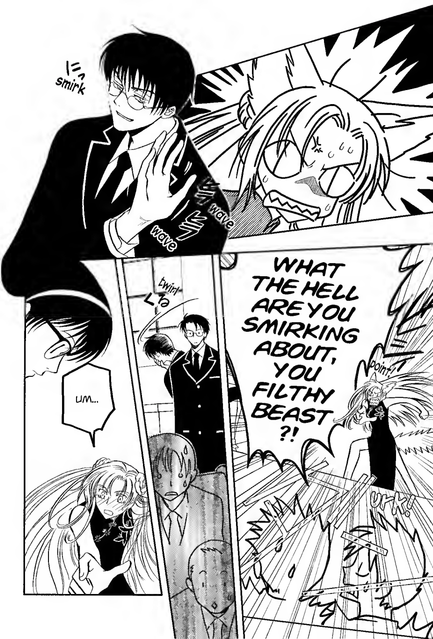
DRUG NO.16

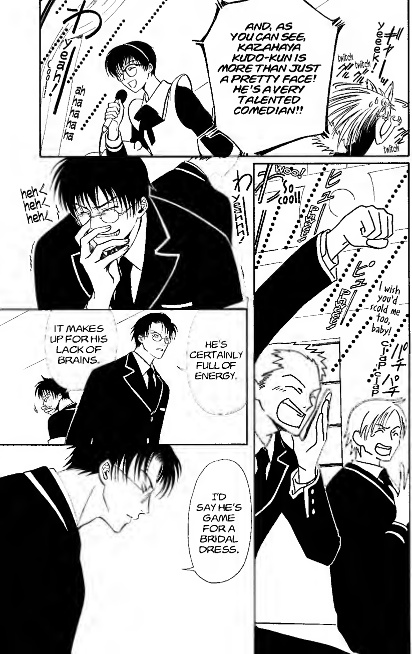
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

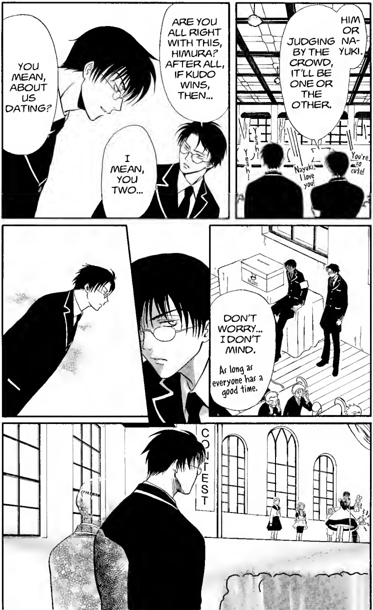

AND NOW, WHAT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR...THE FINAL EVENT OF THIS YEAR'S SUIRYO FESTIVAL!
WHO WILL BE OUR BRIDE THIS YEAR? THE ANSWER IS UP HERE ONSTAGE... AMONG ONE OF OUR FIVE FABULOUS, FAVORITE FIANCÉES!!
HURRAH!!
いいぞ!!
Awesome!
ピュー
tweet!
CONTEST
お!
WOW!
You're all so cute!
You're adorable, Nayuki!!

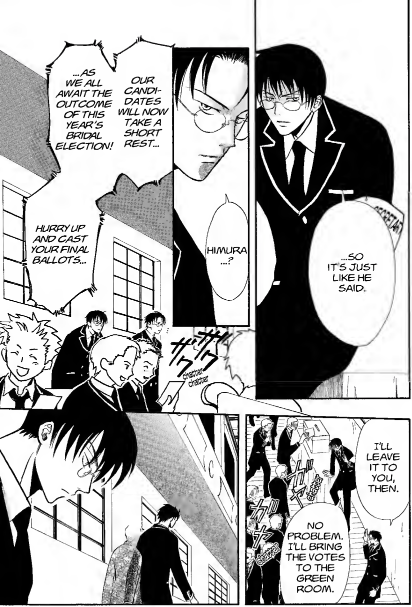

モジ
tug
モジ
shift
SHIFTING IT LIKE THAT ISN'T GOING TO HIDE THOSE LEGS.
In fact, wriggling like that adds appeal.
SECRETARY
HI-MURA.
WHAT'S UP...?
SORRY FOR HAVING YOU WORK. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT ON THE STUDENT COUNCIL...
HEY, NO PROBLEM! I'M GLAD TO HELP.

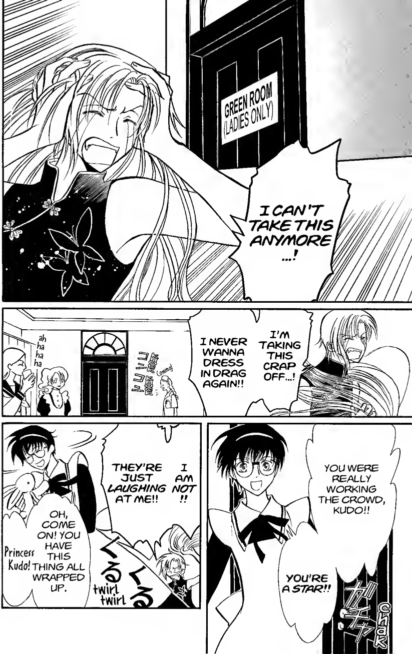

NOW, EVERY-ONE...
...DO YOU ALL HAVE YOUR OFFICIAL VOTING CARDS...?
YEAHHHHHH!
NOW IN THE SPACE PROVIDED, WRITE THE NAME OF THE CANDIDATE YOU WANT TO BE THE BRIDE!!
I PRESUME YOU'VE ALL BROUGHT YOUR PENS AND PENCILS? PLEASE MARK NEATLY AND REMEMBER... PROPER SPELLING!
WHEN YOU'RE READY, PLEASE PLACE YOUR VOTES IN THE BOX ON THE SIDE OF THE HALL...
BALLOTS
tremble ぷる
tremble ぷる

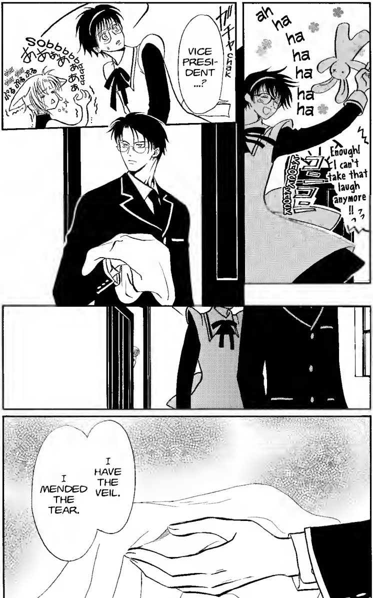

ニ
smirk
wave
wave
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SMIRKING ABOUT, YOU FILTHY BEAST ?!
point
urk!
twirl
くる
um...

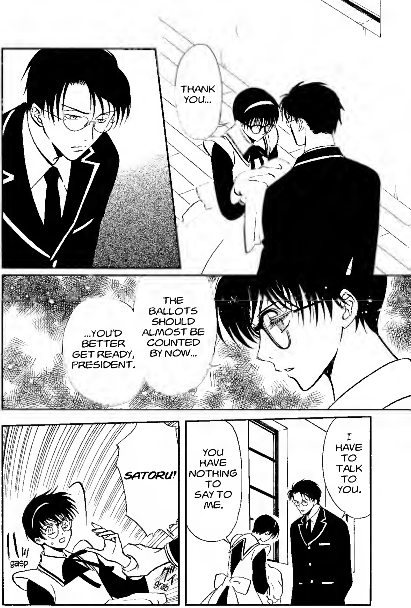

yeeek!
twitch
twitch
twitch
AND, AS YOU CAN SEE, KAZAHAYA KUDO-KUN IS MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE! HE'S A VERY TALENTED COMEDIAN!!
ah ha ha ha ha ha
yeah!
cool!
woo!
so cool!
PHWEEE!
PHWEEE!
I wish you'd scold me too, baby!
clap clap
clap clap
yeahhh!
heh heh heh
HE'S CERTAINLY FULL OF ENERGY.
IT MAKES UP FOR HIS LACK OF BRAINS.
I'D SAY HE'S GAME FOR A BRIDAL DRESS.

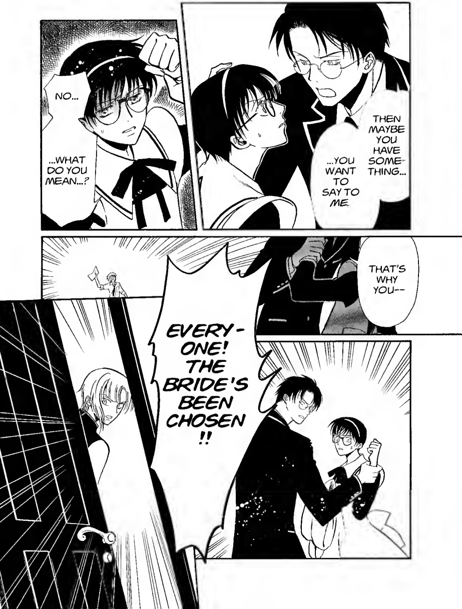

JUDGING BY THE CROWD, IT'LL BE ONE OR THE OTHER.
HIM OR NAYUKI.
Yeah!
Yeah!
Nayuki, I love you!
You're so cute!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT WITH THIS, HIMURA? AFTER ALL, IF KUDO WINS, THEN...
YOU MEAN, ABOUT US DATING?
I MEAN, YOU TWO...
BALLOTS
DON'T WORRY... I DON'T MIND.
As long as everyone has a good time.
CONTEST

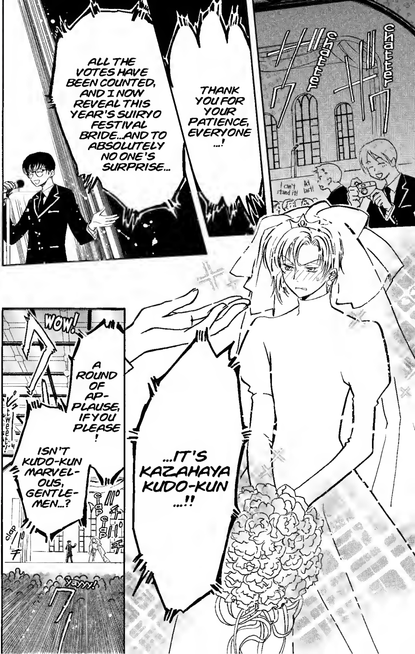

SECRETARY
...SO IT'S JUST LIKE HE SAID.
HIMURA ...?
OUR CANDIDATES WILL NOW TAKE A SHORT REST...
...AS WE ALL AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THIS YEAR'S BRIDAL ELECTION!
HURRY UP AND CAST YOUR FINAL BALLOTS...
chatter chatter
I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU, THEN.
NO PROBLEM. I'LL BRING THE VOTES TO THE GREEN ROOM.
chatter
chatter

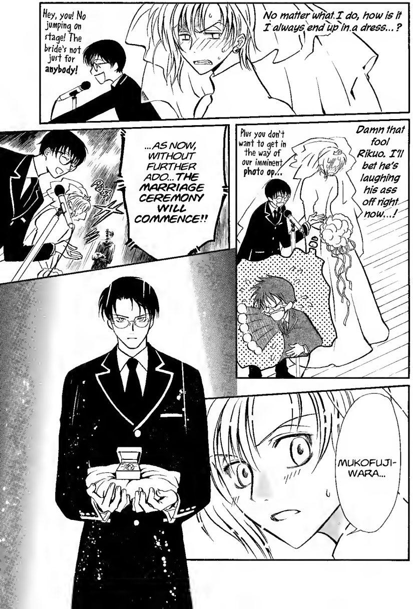

GREEN ROOM (LADIES ONLY)
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE...!
I'M TAKING THIS CRAP OFF...!
I NEVER WANNA DRESS IN DRAG AGAIN!!
Coming!
コン！コン！
KNOCK KNOCK
ah ha ha ha
YOU WERE REALLY WORKING THE CROWD, KUDO!!
YOU'RE A STAR!!
ガチャ
chak
I AM NOT!!
THEY'RE JUST LAUGHING AT ME!!
OH, COME ON! YOU HAVE THIS THING ALL WRAPPED UP.
Princess Kudo!
くるくる
twirl twirl

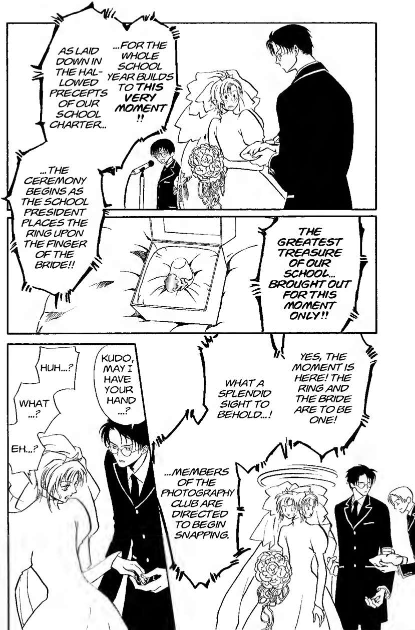

ah ha ha ha ha ha ha
コンコン
knock knock
Enough! I can't take that laugh anymore!!
ガチャ
chak
VICE PRESIDENT ...?
sobbbbbbbbbb
あああああああ
shiver shiver shiver
ぷるぷるぷる
I HAVE THE VEIL.
I MENDED THE TEAR.

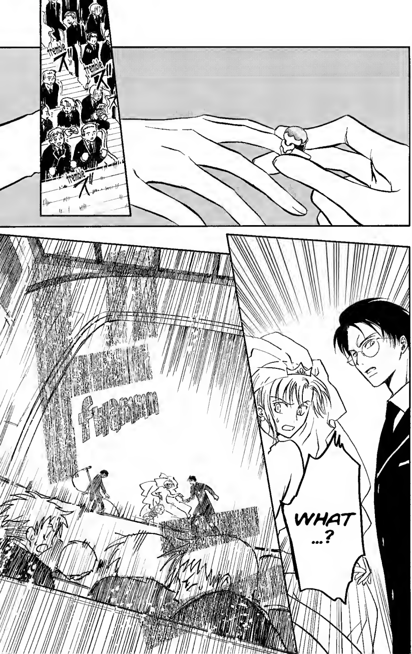

THANK YOU...
THE BALLOTS SHOULD ALMOST BE COUNTED BY NOW...
...YOU'D BETTER GET READY, PRESIDENT.
I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO ME.
SATORU!
gasp
grab

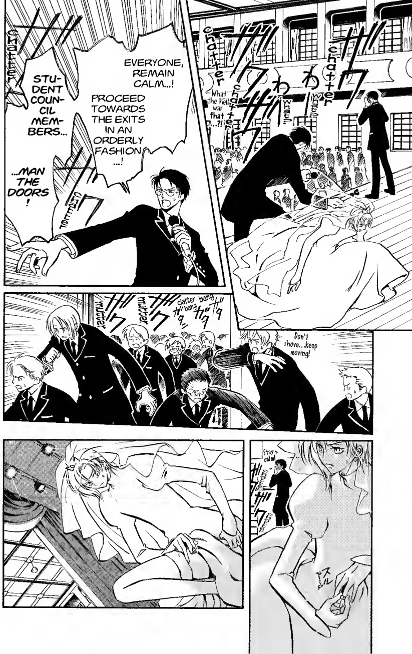

THEN MAYBE YOU HAVE SOMETHING...
...YOU WANT TO SAY TO ME.
NO...
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
THAT'S WHY YOU--
EVERYONE! THE BRIDE'S BEEN CHOSEN!!

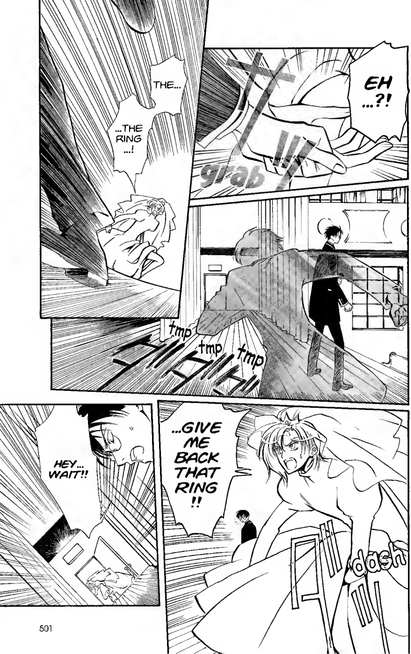

chatter
chatter
I can't stand it!
At last!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, EVERYONE...!
ALL THE VOTES HAVE BEEN COUNTED, AND I NOW REVEAL THIS YEAR'S SUIRYO FESTIVAL BRIDE...AND TO ABSOLUTELY NO ONE'S SURPRISE...
...IT'S KAZAHAYA KUDO-KUN...!!
WOW!
A ROUND OF APPLAUSE, IF YOU PLEASE!
ISN'T KUDO-KUN MARVELOUS, GENTLEMEN...?
tweet!
clap
clap
clap
yayy!

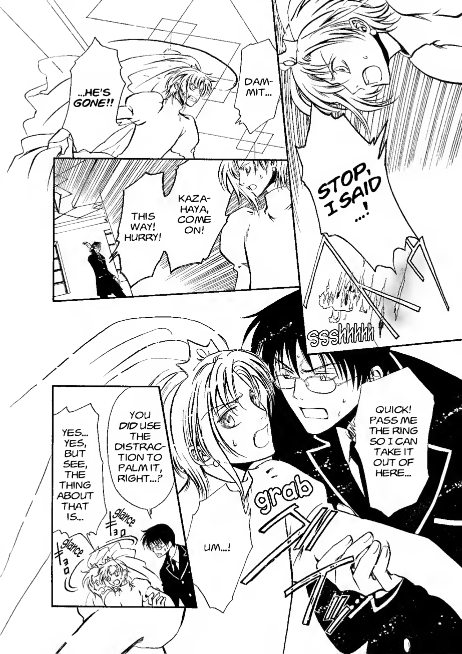

No matter what I do, how is it I always end up in a dress...?
Hey, you! No jumping on stage! The bride's not just for **anybody!**
Damn that fool Rikuo. I'll bet he's laughing his ass off right now...!
Plus you don't want to get in the way of our imminent **photo op...**
...AS NOW, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO...THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY WILL COMMENCE!!
FLASH
MUKOFUJI-WARA...

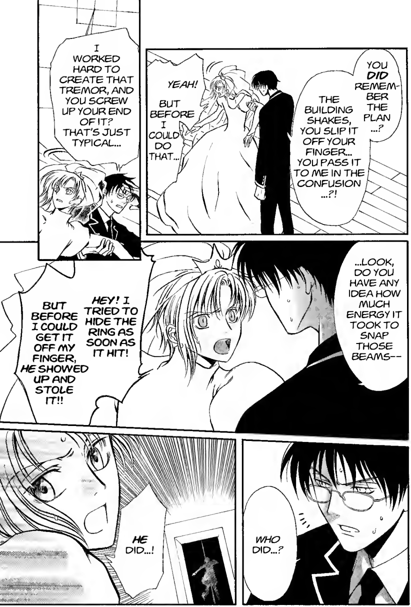

AS LAID DOWN IN THE HALLOWED PRECEPTS OF OUR SCHOOL CHARTER...
...FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL YEAR BUILDS TO **THIS VERY MOMENT**!!
...THE CEREMONY BEGINS AS THE SCHOOL PRESIDENT PLACES THE RING UPON THE FINGER OF THE BRIDE!!
THE GREATEST TREASURE OF OUR SCHOOL... BROUGHT OUT FOR THIS MOMENT ONLY!!
HUH...?
WHAT...?
EH...?
KUDO, MAY I HAVE YOUR HAND...?
WHAT A SPLENDID SIGHT TO BEHOLD...!
YES, THE MOMENT IS HERE! THE RING AND THE BRIDE ARE TO BE ONE!
...MEMBERS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB ARE DIRECTED TO BEGIN SNAPPING.

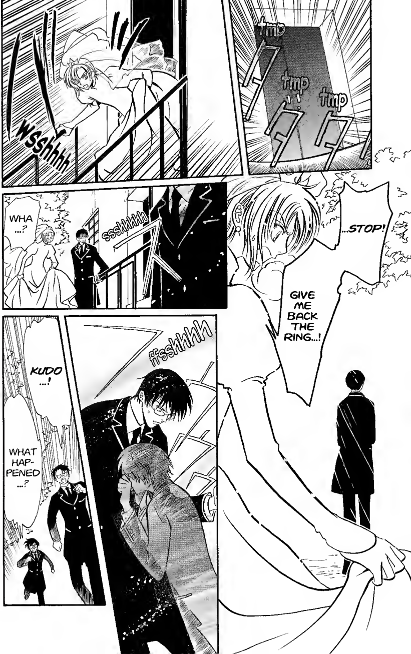

tremble
tremble
tremble
WHAT ...?
fwammm

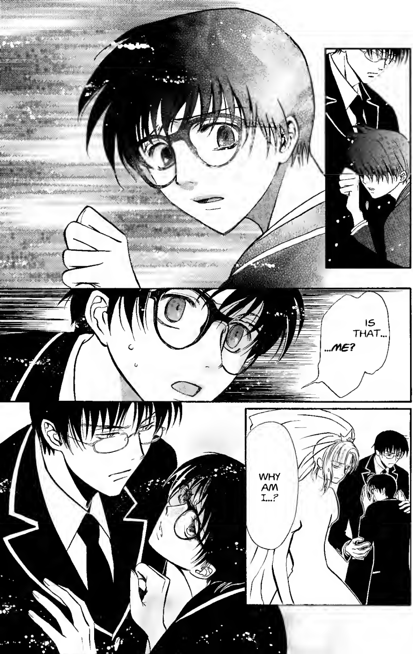

ザワ
chatter
ザワ
chatter
わ
what?
わ
what?
ザワザワ
chatter
chatter
What the hell war that...?!
EVERYONE, REMAIN CALM...!
PROCEED TOWARDS THE EXITS IN AN ORDERLY FASHION...!
STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS...
...MAN THE DOORS!
ザワ
chatter
ザワ
chatter
ガタ ガタ
clatter bang bang
ザワ
mutter
ザワ
mutter
Don't shove...keep moving!
Stay calm!
...
ザワザワ
commotion
commotion
スル
slip

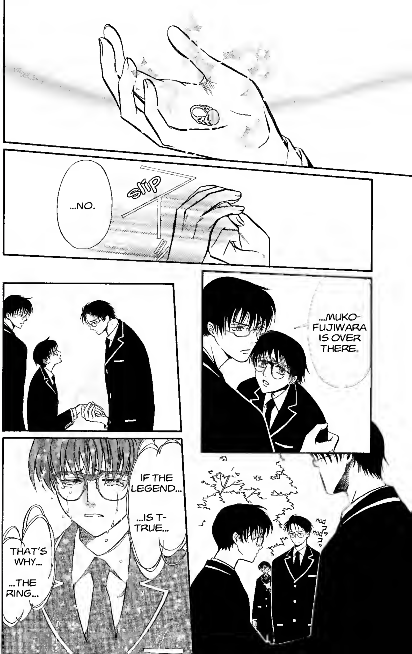

EH ...?!
grab
THE...
...THE RING ...!
tmp
tmp
tmp
...GIVE ME BACK THAT RING !!
dash
HEY... WAIT!!

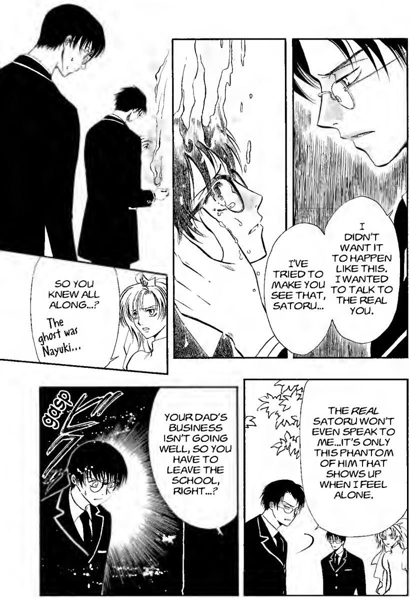

STOP, I SAID ...!
ssshhhhh
DAMMIT...
...HE'S GONE!!
KAZAHAYA, COME ON!
THIS WAY! HURRY!
QUICK! PASS ME THE RING SO I CAN TAKE IT OUT OF HERE...
grab
UM...!
YOU *DID* USE THE DISTRACTION TO PALM IT, RIGHT...?
YES... YES, BUT SEE, THE THING ABOUT THAT IS...
glance
glance

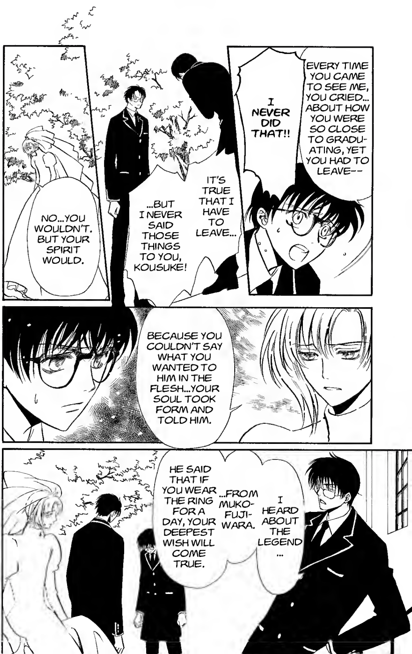

YOU *DID* REMEMBER THE PLAN ...?
THE BUILDING SHAKES, YOU SLIP IT OFF YOUR FINGER... YOU PASS IT TO ME IN THE CONFUSION ...?!
YEAH! BUT BEFORE I COULD DO THAT...
I WORKED HARD TO CREATE THAT TREMOR, AND YOU SCREW UP YOUR END OF IT? THAT'S JUST TYPICAL...
...LOOK, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH ENERGY IT TOOK TO SNAP THOSE BEAMS--
HEY! I TRIED TO HIDE THE RING AS SOON AS IT HIT!
BUT BEFORE I COULD GET IT OFF MY FINGER, *HE* SHOWED UP AND STOLE IT!!
WHO DID...?
HE DID...!

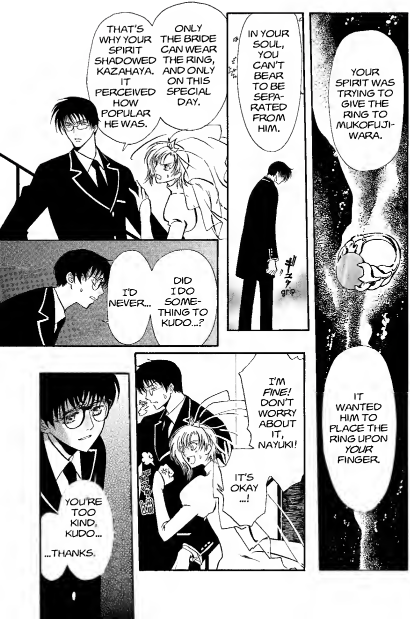

tmp
tmp
tmp
wsshhhh
...STOP!
GIVE ME BACK THE RING...!
WHA ...?
ssshhhh
ffsshhhh
KUDO ...!
WHAT HAPPENED ...?

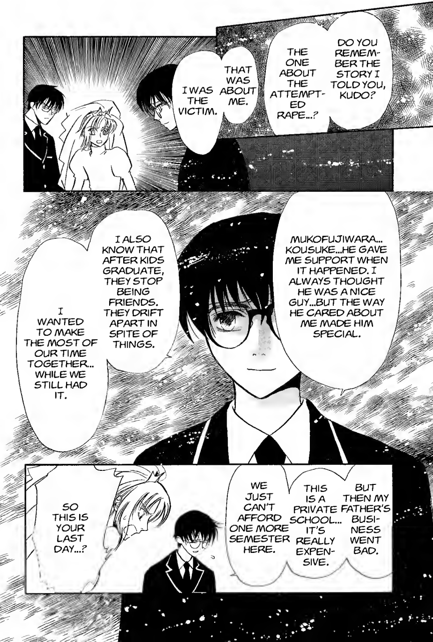

IS THAT... ...ME?
WHY AM I...?

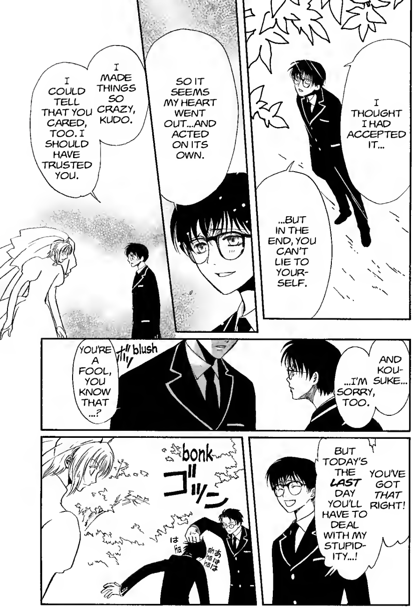

SLIP
...NO.
...MUKO-FUJIWARA IS OVER THERE.
NOD NOD
IF THE LEGEND...
...IS T-TRUE...
THAT'S WHY...
...THE RING...

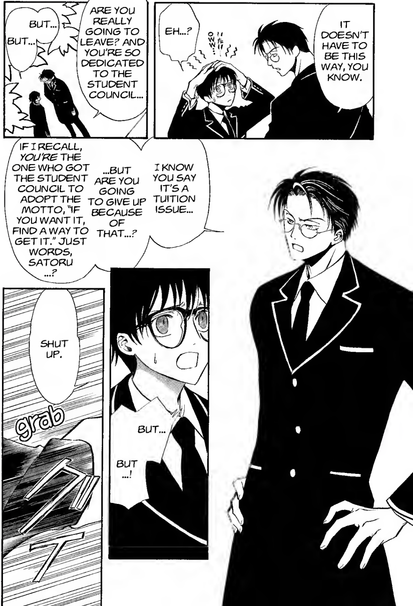

I DIDN'T WANT IT TO HAPPEN LIKE THIS. I WANTED TO TALK TO THE REAL YOU.
I'VE TRIED TO MAKE YOU SEE THAT, SATORU...
SO YOU KNEW ALL ALONG...?
The ghost was Nayuki...
THE *REAL* SATORU WON'T EVEN SPEAK TO ME...IT'S ONLY THIS PHANTOM OF HIM THAT SHOWS UP WHEN I FEEL ALONE.
gasp
YOUR DAD'S BUSINESS ISN'T GOING WELL, SO YOU HAVE TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL, RIGHT...?

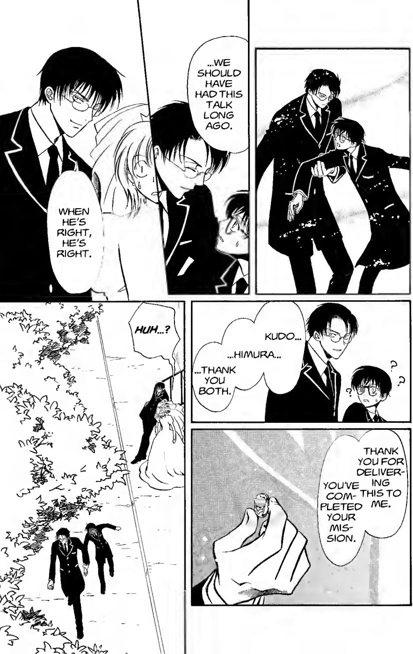

EVERY TIME YOU CAME TO SEE ME, YOU CRIED... ABOUT HOW YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO GRADUATING, YET YOU HAD TO LEAVE--
I NEVER DID THAT!!
IT'S TRUE THAT I HAVE TO LEAVE...
...BUT I NEVER SAID THOSE THINGS TO YOU, KOUSUKE!
NO...YOU WOULDN'T. BUT YOUR SPIRIT WOULD.
BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T SAY WHAT YOU WANTED TO HIM IN THE FLESH...YOUR SOUL TOOK FORM AND TOLD HIM.
I HEARD ABOUT THE LEGEND ...
...FROM MUKO-FUJIWARA.
HE SAID THAT IF YOU WEAR THE RING FOR A DAY, YOUR DEEPEST WISH WILL COME TRUE.

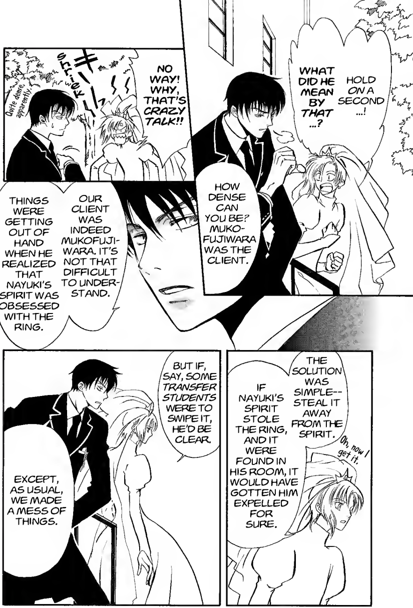

YOUR SPIRIT WAS TRYING TO GIVE THE RING TO MUKOFUJIWARA.
IT WANTED HIM TO PLACE THE RING UPON *YOUR* FINGER.
IN YOUR SOUL, YOU CAN'T BEAR TO BE SEPARATED FROM HIM.
grip
ONLY THE BRIDE CAN WEAR THE RING, AND ONLY ON THIS SPECIAL DAY.
THAT'S WHY YOUR SPIRIT SHADOWED KAZAHAYA. IT PERCEIVED HOW POPULAR HE WAS.
DID I DO SOMETHING TO KUDO...?
I'D NEVER...
I'M *FINE!* DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, NAYUKI!
IT'S OKAY ...!
sigh
boff
YOU'RE TOO KIND, KUDO...
...THANKS.

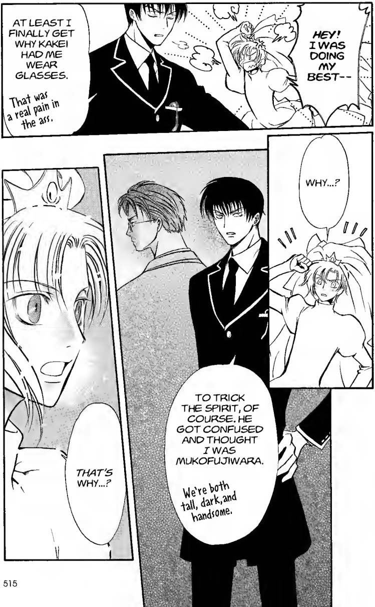

DO YOU REMEMBER THE STORY I TOLD YOU, KUDO?
THE ONE ABOUT THE ATTEMPTED RAPE...?
THAT WAS ABOUT ME.
I WAS THE VICTIM.
MUKOFUJIWARA... KOUSUKE...HE GAVE ME SUPPORT WHEN IT HAPPENED. I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS A NICE GUY...BUT THE WAY HE CARED ABOUT ME MADE HIM SPECIAL.
I ALSO KNOW THAT AFTER KIDS GRADUATE, THEY STOP BEING FRIENDS. THEY DRIFT APART IN SPITE OF THINGS.
I WANTED TO MAKE THE MOST OF OUR TIME TOGETHER... WHILE WE STILL HAD IT.
BUT THEN MY FATHER'S BUSINESS WENT BAD.
THIS IS A PRIVATE SCHOOL... IT'S REALLY EXPENSIVE.
WE JUST CAN'T AFFORD ONE MORE SEMESTER HERE.
SO THIS IS YOUR LAST DAY...?

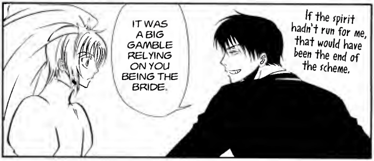

I THOUGHT I HAD ACCEPTED IT...
...BUT IN THE END, YOU CAN'T LIE TO YOURSELF.
SO IT SEEMS MY HEART WENT OUT...AND ACTED ON ITS OWN.
I MADE THINGS SO CRAZY, KUDO.
I COULD TELL THAT YOU CARED, TOO. I SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED YOU.
AND KOUSUKE...I'M SORRY, TOO.
blush
YOU'RE A FOOL, YOU KNOW THAT...?
BUT TODAY'S THE *LAST* DAY YOU'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH MY STUPIDITY...!
YOU'VE GOT *THAT* RIGHT!
bonk
ゴッン
ah ha ha あはは
ha は

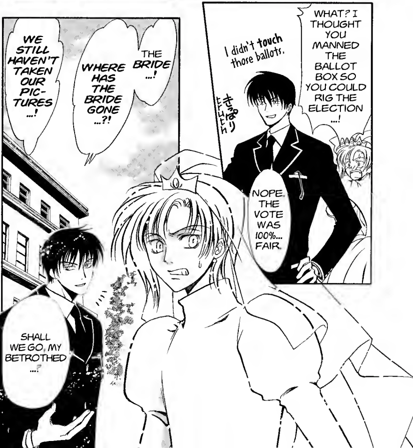

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY, YOU KNOW.
EH...?
OWW...
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO LEAVE? AND YOU'RE SO DEDICATED TO THE STUDENT COUNCIL...
BUT...
BUT...
I KNOW YOU SAY IT'S A TUITION ISSUE...
...BUT ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE UP BECAUSE OF THAT...?
IF I RECALL, *YOU'RE* THE ONE WHO GOT THE STUDENT COUNCIL TO ADOPT THE MOTTO, "IF YOU WANT IT, FIND A WAY TO GET IT." JUST WORDS, SATORU ...?
BUT...
BUT ...!
SHUT UP.
grab

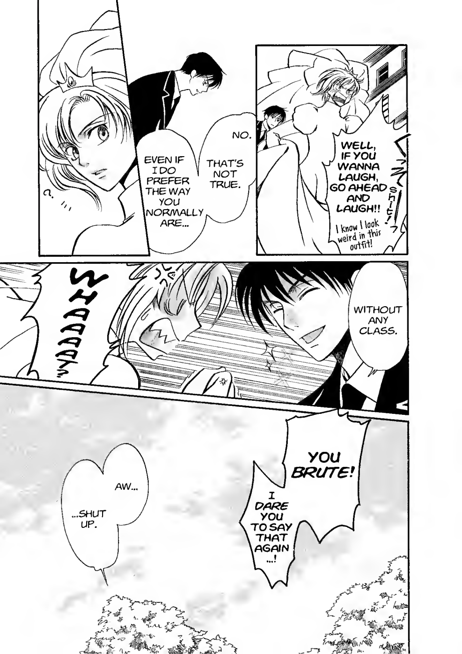

...WE SHOULD HAVE HAD THIS TALK LONG AGO.
WHEN HE'S RIGHT, HE'S RIGHT.
KUDO...
...HIMURA...
...THANK YOU BOTH.
? ? ?
THANK YOU FOR DELIVERING THIS TO ME.
YOU'VE COMPLETED YOUR MISSION.
HUH...?


HOLD ON A SECOND ...!
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY *THAT* ...?
HOW DENSE CAN YOU BE? MUKO-FUJIWARA WAS THE CLIENT.
NO WAY! WHY, THAT'S *CRAZY TALK!!*
shriek
Quite dense, apparently
OUR CLIENT WAS INDEED MUKOFUJIWARA. IT'S NOT THAT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.
THINGS WERE GETTING OUT OF HAND WHEN HE REALIZED THAT NAYUKI'S SPIRIT WAS OBSESSED WITH THE RING.
THE SOLUTION WAS SIMPLE--STEAL IT AWAY FROM THE SPIRIT.
IF NAYUKI'S SPIRIT STOLE THE RING, AND IT WERE FOUND IN HIS ROOM, IT WOULD HAVE GOTTEN HIM EXPELLED FOR SURE.
Oh, now I get it.
BUT IF, SAY, SOME *TRANSFER STUDENTS* WERE TO SWIPE IT, HE'D BE CLEAR.
EXCEPT, AS USUAL, WE MADE A MESS OF THINGS.


HEY! I WAS DOING MY BEST--
AT LEAST I FINALLY GET WHY KAKEI HAD ME WEAR GLASSES.
That was a real pain in the ass.
WHY...?
TO TRICK THE SPIRIT, OF COURSE. HE GOT CONFUSED AND THOUGHT I WAS MUKOFUJIWARA.
We're both tall, dark, and handsome.
THAT'S WHY...?


If the spirit hadn't run for me, that would have been the end of the scheme.
IT WAS A BIG GAMBLE RELYING ON YOU BEING THE BRIDE.


WHAT? I THOUGHT YOU MANNED THE BALLOT BOX SO YOU COULD RIG THE ELECTION...!
I didn't touch those ballots.
きっぱり
TRUTH
NOPE. THE VOTE WAS 100%... FAIR.
THE BRIDE...!
WHERE HAS THE BRIDE GONE...?!
WE STILL HAVEN'T TAKEN OUR PICTURES...!
SHALL WE GO, MY BETROTHED...?

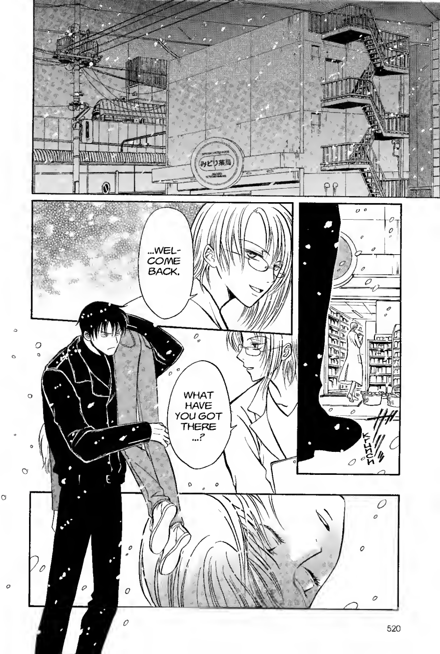

WELL, IF YOU WANNA LAUGH, GO AHEAD AND LAUGH!!
I know I look weird in this outfit!
shit!
NO.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
EVEN IF I DO PREFER THE WAY YOU NORMALLY ARE...
a...
WITHOUT ANY CLASS.
WHAAAAA?!
YOU BRUTE!
I DARE YOU TO SAY THAT AGAIN...!
AW...
...SHUT UP.

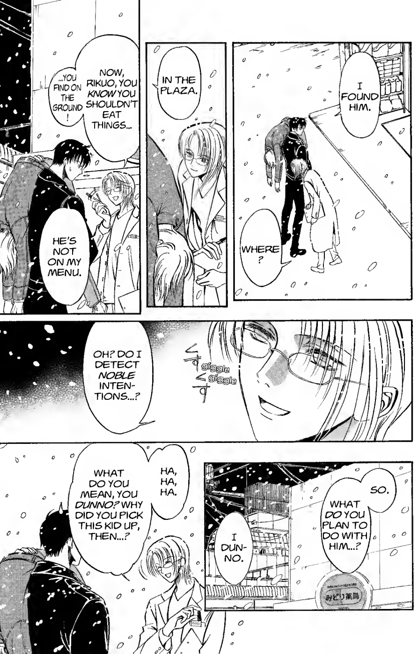
GREEN DRUGSTORE
みどり薬局
TOKYO

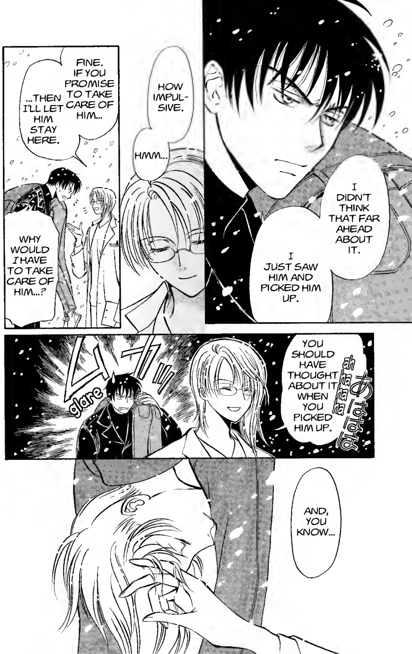
LEGAL DRUG

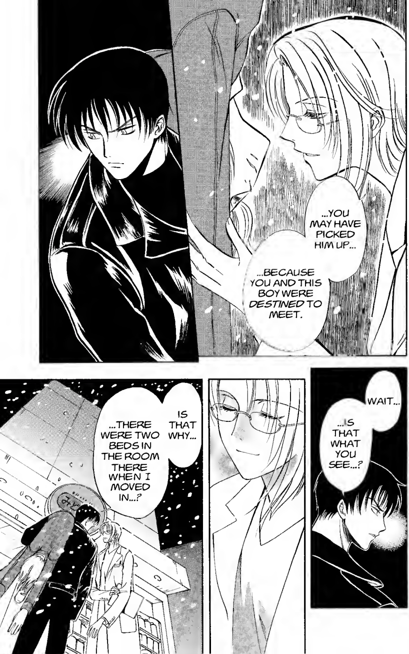
DRUG EXTRA

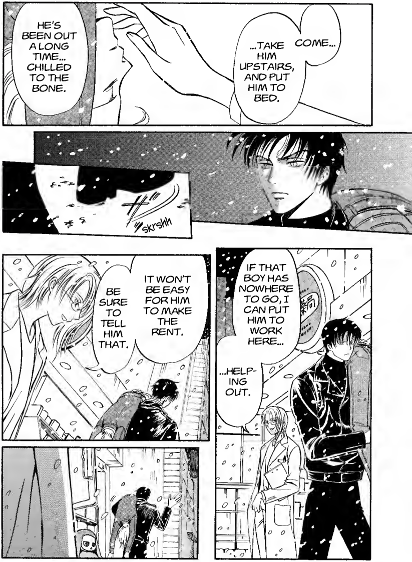
Daily use of the drug causes poisoning.

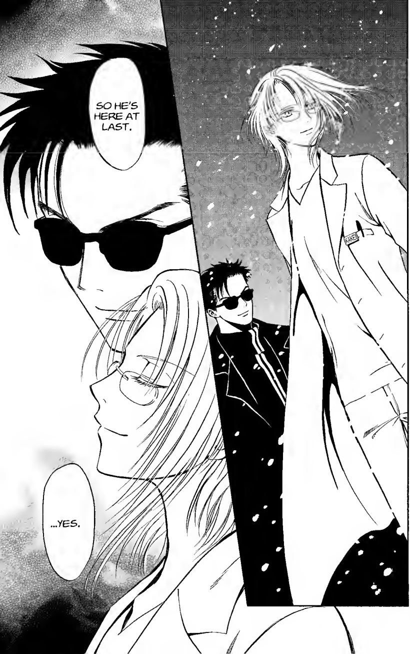

みどり薬局
KRHCH
...WEL-COME BACK.
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE ...?

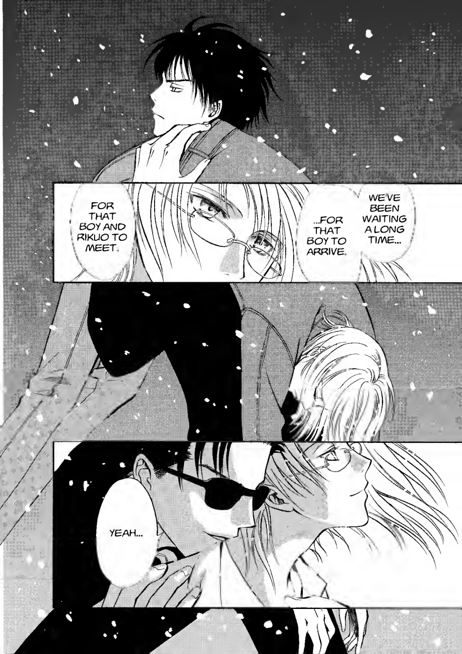

I FOUND HIM.
WHERE?
IN THE PLAZA.
NOW, RIKUO, YOU *KNOW* YOU SHOULDN'T EAT THINGS...
...YOU FIND ON THE GROUND!
HE'S NOT ON MY MENU.
くすくす giggle giggle
OH? DO I DETECT *NOBLE* INTENTIONS...?
SO.
WHAT *DO* YOU PLAN TO DO WITH HIM...?
I DUNNO.
みどり薬局
HA, HA, HA.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU *DUNNO?* WHY DID YOU PICK THIS KID UP, THEN...?

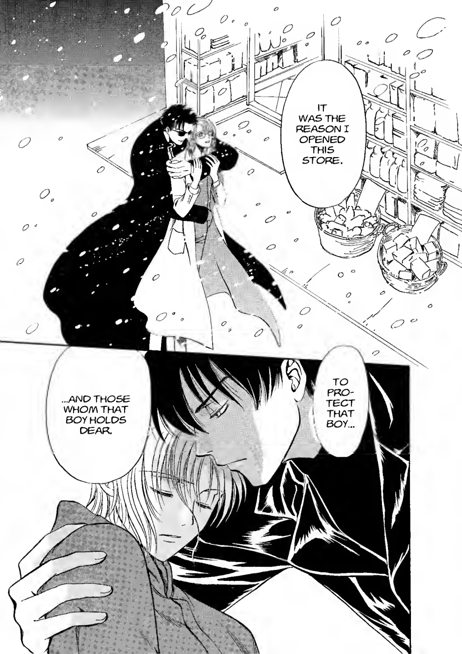

I DIDN'T THINK THAT FAR AHEAD ABOUT IT.
I JUST SAW HIM AND PICKED HIM UP.
HMM...
HOW IMPUL-SIVE.
FINE. IF YOU PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF HIM...
...THEN I'LL LET HIM STAY HERE.
WHY WOULD *I* HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF HIM...?
あははは
ah ha ha ha
YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT WHEN YOU PICKED HIM UP.
ムカッ
glare
AND, YOU KNOW...


...YOU MAY HAVE PICKED HIM UP...
...BECAUSE YOU AND THIS BOY WERE *DESTINED* TO MEET.
WAIT...
...IS THAT WHAT YOU SEE...?
IS THAT WHY...
...THERE WERE TWO BEDS IN THE ROOM THERE WHEN I MOVED IN...?


COME...
...TAKE HIM UPSTAIRS, AND PUT HIM TO BED.
HE'S BEEN OUT A LONG TIME... CHILLED TO THE BONE.
skrshh
IF THAT BOY HAS NOWHERE TO GO, I CAN PUT HIM TO WORK HERE...
...HELPING OUT.
IT WON'T BE EASY FOR HIM TO MAKE THE RENT.
BE SURE TO TELL HIM THAT.

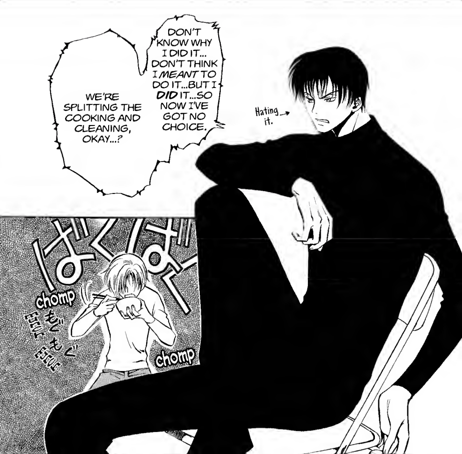

KAKEI
SO HE'S HERE AT LAST.
...YES.

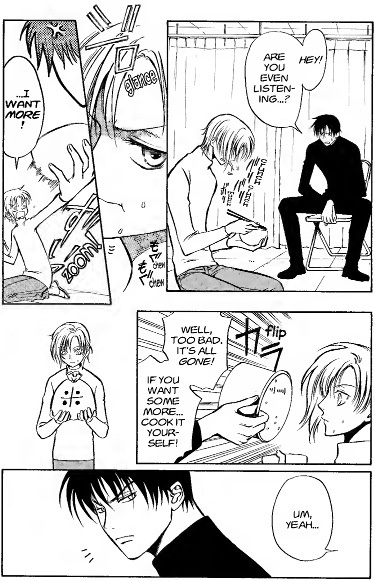

WE'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME...
...FOR THAT BOY TO ARRIVE.
FOR THAT BOY AND RIKUO TO MEET.
YEAH...

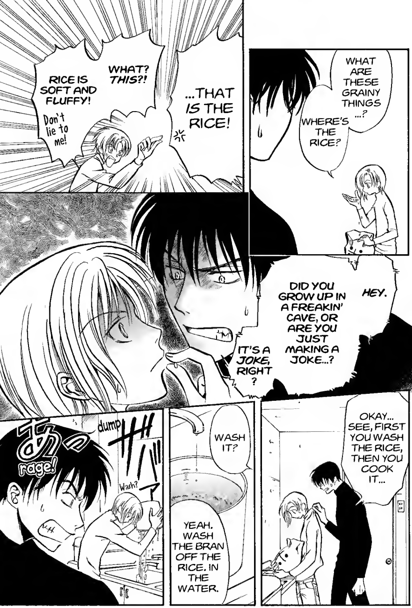

IT WAS THE REASON I OPENED THIS STORE.
TO PROTECT THAT BOY...
...AND THOSE WHOM THAT BOY HOLDS DEAR.

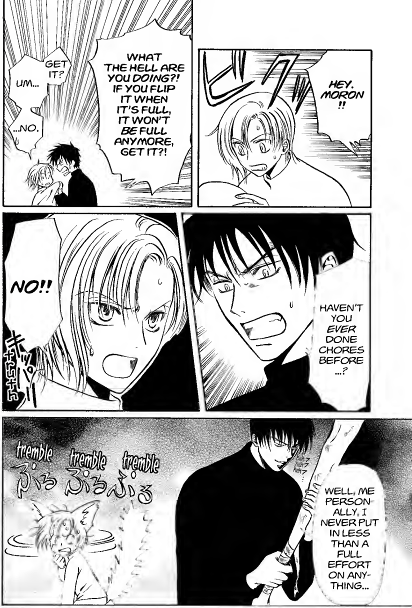
ILLEGAL DRUG

EXTRA after


DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT... DON'T THINK I *MEANT* TO DO IT...BUT I ***DID*** IT...SO NOW I'VE GOT NO CHOICE.
WE'RE SPLITTING THE COOKING AND CLEANING, OKAY...?
Hating it.
ぱくぱく
chomp
もぐもぐ
chomp


HEY!
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING...?
CRUNCH
MUNCH
glance
...I WANT MORE!
zoom!
も chew
も chew
flip
WELL, TOO BAD. IT'S ALL GONE!
IF YOU WANT SOME MORE... COOK IT YOURSELF!
UM, YEAH...


WHAT ARE THESE GRAINY THINGS ...?
WHERE'S THE RICE?
...THAT *IS* THE RICE!
WHAT? *THIS?!*
RICE IS SOFT AND FLUFFY!
Don't lie to me!
HEY.
DID YOU GROW UP IN A FREAKIN' CAVE, OR ARE YOU JUST MAKING A JOKE...?
IT'S A *JOKE,* RIGHT?
OKAY... SEE, FIRST YOU WASH THE RICE, THEN YOU COOK IT...
WASH IT?
YEAH. WASH THE BRAN OFF THE RICE. IN THE WATER.
ザバァ
dump
Wash?
あっ
rage!


ビクッ
HEY. MORON !!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU *DOING*?! IF YOU FLIP IT WHEN IT'S FULL, IT WON'T *BE* FULL ANYMORE, GET IT?!
GET IT?
UM...
...NO.
HAVEN'T YOU *EVER* DONE CHORES BEFORE ...?
NO!!
キッパ!!
WELL, ME PERSONALLY, I NEVER PUT IN LESS THAN A FULL EFFORT ON ANYTHING...
heh
tremble tremble tremble
ぷるぷるぷる

And that's how Kazahaya learned to wash rice!

STAFF DRUG

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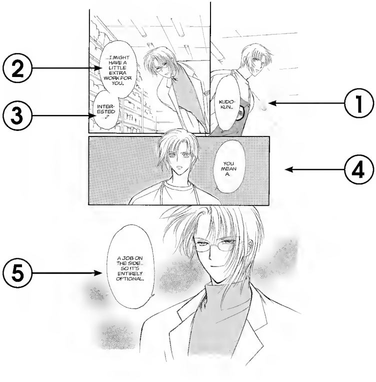
STOP!

THIS IS THE BACK OF THE BOOK!

This manga collection is translated into English, but arranged in right-to-left reading format to maintain the artwork's visual orientation as originally drawn and published in Japan. If you've never read comics this way before, take a look at the diagram below to give yourself an idea of how to go about it. Basically, you'll be starting in the upper right-hand corner, and will read each word balloon and panel moving right to left. It may take a little getting used to, but you should get the hang of it very quickly. Have fun! If this is the millionth manga you've read this way, never mind. ^_^


①
KUDO-KUN..
②
..I MIGHT HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA WORK FOR YOU.
③
INTERESTED..?
④
YOU MEAN A..
⑤
A JOB ON THE SIDE... SO IT'S ENTIRELY OPTIONAL.